Silas Marner

BY GEORGE ELIOT

The Devil and Daniel Webster

BY STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

The Merchant of Venice

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

The Riverside Literature Series

SILAS MARNER

THE WEAVER OF RAVELOE

BY

GEORGE ELIOT

A child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts.
WORDSWORTH.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
BLISS CARMAN

EDITED WITH FULL STUDY AND
TEACHING EQUIPMENT

BY

H. A. DAVIDSON

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INTRODUCTION.

LIKE most great artists of the world, George Eliot was peculiarly the product of her own time. The child of speculation and doubt, she voices in prose all the uneasy questions of the human soul which found such a bitter cry in the poetry of Arnold. Mill and Spencer, Darwin and Comte, the masters of rationalism, were her true mental sponsors; it is their doctrine she preaches, their guidance she accepts; and if we remember that this daughter of their adoption was born in one of the narrower houses of the older faith, we shall be less surprised at the tenacity with which she clings to her newer beliefs and the vehemence with which she inculcates them. To the desperation of a skeptic she added the zeal of a convert. More uncompromising than Matthew Arnold in discarding the accepted creed of her day, less sure than Browning of any personal faith with which to replace it, she is eminently the one great artist given to English literature by the scientific spirit of the Victorian age. And this, perhaps, is the best point of departure from which to make a study of her work, — the point of view which is most likely to give us fruitful and luminous results.

Her life, so simple in its story, may be told almost in a paragraph. Mary Ann Evans (or Marian Evans, as she afterwards called herself, and as she was known

to her friends) was born at Arbury Farm, in Warwickshire, November 22, 1819. At the time of her birth, her father, Robert Evans, was forester and land-agent in charge of the estates of Mr. Francis Newdigate, of Arbury Hall. Four months afterwards the family removed to Griff, on the same property, where they remained for the next twenty years. Here Marian first went to school with her brother Isaac; and many of the impressions of this period of her life are preserved for us, it is said, in the characters of Maggie and Tom Tulliver, in *The Mill on the Floss*. At the age of nine she was sent to a private school in Nuneaton, where she formed a close friendship with one of the teachers, a Miss Lewis, to whom many of her most intimate letters were afterwards addressed. She was next transferred to a similar school in Coventry, where she remained for three years. Among her companions she attained a distinction for seriousness beyond her years; she was devoted to her books, passionately fond of music, and even at that age a remarkable talker. Indeed, so charming was her conversation, that there is a tradition her school-fellows disputed for the pleasure of walking with her, until the teacher settled their differences by apportioning the coveted privilege among them daily in alphabetical rotation. At the age of sixteen she lost her mother (Christiana Pearson, Robert Evans's second wife), and thereafter assumed full control of her father's household. In the spring of 1841, when she was just of age, her brother Isaac married and brought his wife home to the house at Griff, and Marian removed with her father to Foleshill on the outskirts of Coventry. Here her education began in earnest. By a systematic course of reading and private study she laid the foundation of those

habits which were to make her one of the most broadly cultivated women of the century. She studied Latin and Greek with the master of the Grammar School; another tutor was secured in French, German, and Italian; while she undertook Hebrew by herself. Here, too, she made the acquaintance of Charles Bray and his wife, Caroline Hennell, who were soon to become her closest friends, and who with Charles Hennell were the first to give her mind its bent towards free thought. So pronounced did her rationalistic convictions become that a breach with her father was only avoided by her conceding to his wishes and so far compromising her views as to attend church service as usual.

In 1846 appeared George Eliot's first literary venture, a translation of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, a careful and scholarly piece of work. In 1849, on the death of her father, she went abroad and remained nearly a year. Returning to England in the spring of 1850, she began to contribute to *The Westminster Review*, and in September was invited by John Chapman to assist him in the editorial conduct of the magazine, a task to which she devoted herself for two years. At this period, although she had the advantage of meeting many of the leading radicals and eager scientific speculators, whom Chapman was accustomed to bring about him in fortnightly gatherings at his house, George Eliot had little time for independent work. Her only productions were a translation of Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*, issued in 1854, and a number of critical essays contributed to *The Westminster*.

It was not in this sort of composition, however, that George Eliot was destined to reach her most effective

utterance. She is not happy as an essayist. She is at once too cold and too strenuous to touch lightly the foibles of her fellows. Her humor, so undoubted and so abundant, is lacking in that easy restraint, that final tolerance, which gives the keenest edge to irony. When evil and error are to be attacked, she loses her head and falls upon them with a bludgeon, quite forgetting how effective the rapier can be. As a consequence, her not infrequent excursions into the domain of satire are usually luckless and Quixotic. She is far too serious, her nature is far too deeply imbued with the tinge of her evangelical blood, ever to confront folly with a smile. She is the sister of Calvin and Knox, albeit so far astray from that fold. Her passion for righteousness hurried her into the forum, and filled her mouth with ponderous invectives against wrong. For the orthodox Christian, she is a priestess without an altar, a prophetess without a shrine; but the vestments of her holy office are never laid aside. That indolent regard with which such essayists as Montaigne and Lamb and Stevenson looked out upon the world was never hers; nor could she command the scorching sarcasm of Carlyle. So that her essays, with all their conscientious accuracy, are somewhat flat and pedantic.

Soon, however, she was to find the proper outlet for her powers in those remarkable novels which began with the *Scenes from Clerical Life*, in 1857, and ended with *Daniel Deronda*, in 1876. This unfolding of her genius was largely due to the encouragement and devoted care of the man with whom her name will always be inseparably connected. George Henry Lewes was one of the brilliant set by whom Mr. Chapman had been surrounded on *The West*

minster Review. He had been married in early life to a woman who deserted him; but as he had condoned her offence in the eye of the law, by taking her back to his home, he could not, when she left him a second time, obtain a divorce in the English courts. His intimacy with George Eliot grew, and in 1854, as a legal marriage was impossible, they took the law into their own hands, and entered upon the relation which was to last until his death, a quarter of a century later, and which entailed for them both (so far, at least, as personal good intention and determination can go) all the obligations which religious sanctions usually supply. That George Eliot could never quite justify her own conduct to herself, in thus violating universally accepted traditions, may perhaps be inferred from the frequency with which in her after work she enforces the sanctity of the marriage tie. Marian Evans and George Henry Lewes left England in July, 1854, for a residence of three months in Weimar, where Lewes was busy on his *Life of Goethe*, and an equal stay in Berlin. They then returned to take up their abode in Dover, and later in East Sheen and in Richmond. It was not until 1865 that they took possession of The Priory, in St. John's Wood, where those famous Sunday gatherings were held until the time of Mr. Lewes's death.

In November, 1856, at Lewes's urgent suggestion, and under his encouragement, George Eliot made her first attempt in fiction. The insight which could criticise other novelists with so much sympathy must be capable, her husband conjectured, of not a little creative skill in the same field.

The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton was written, and sent by Lewes to William Blackwood, as

the work of an anonymous friend. Blackwood at once saw the merits of the work, and accepted it for publication in his magazine. This was the first of the series of *Scenes from Clerical Life*, which was completed and issued in book form in 1858. As the different numbers appeared in *Blackwood's*, the editor was informed by Mr. Lewes that he was to know his anonymous contributor as George Eliot. The name was soon famous, and more than one pretender arose to claim the public honor of bearing it. If the *Scenes from Clerical Life* arrested the attention of the reading world, *Adam Bede*, which followed it, established the new novelist's right to a place among her most distinguished contemporaries.

Once embarked on her career, George Eliot's powers of concentration enabled her to accomplish large tasks in the next sixteen or seventeen years. Her first novel was followed by *The Mill on the Floss* (a title suggested by her editor, Mr. Blackwood, in place of "Sister Maggie," the name she had at first given it) in 1860; *Silas Marner*, in 1861; *Romola*, previously printed in *The Cornhill Magazine*, in 1863; *Felix Holt*, in 1866; *Middlemarch*, issued in eight bi-monthly parts, in 1871–72; and *Daniel Deronda*, also in eight parts, in 1876. This enumeration of the novels, with the addition of two volumes of poems, *The Spanish Gypsy*, in 1868, *Jubal, and Other Poems*, in 1874; a volume of essays, in 1879, entitled *The Impressions of Theophrastus Such;* and two other volumes of essays published since her death, forms a complete list of George Eliot's original works. Her only short stories were *The Lifted Veil* and *Brother Jacob*, both published anonymously in *Blackwood's Magazine*, the one in

Like It. It is in the comedies that the conversion of a good play into a good story is the less sure, for in them especially the charm lies in many things more than one can reveal by the mere unfolding of a story — and to that the Lambs addressed themselves.

To follow the lives of the Lambs carefully on to the end would be aside from the purpose of this brief sketch — to tell of their movings from house to house, at last from town to country, of Charles's release from work too late to enjoy his freedom, of Mary's growing instability of mind, of the death of the brother in 1834, and of the sister, her brain at the end quite clouded, in 1847. All these things and many more — pathetic, droll, inspiring — are told in the scores of books relating directly to the Lambs and their friends.

We began with a bit from the opening of the Lambs' own Preface, and can do no better than to return to it again, at the end, where it is written of Shakespeare's plays that they are "enrichers of the fancy, strengtheners of virtue, a withdrawing from all selfish and mercenary thoughts, a lesson of all sweet and honorable thoughts and actions, to teach courtesy, benignity, generosity, humanity; for of examples, teaching these virtues, his pages are full." So, too, were the lives of Charles and Mary Lamb, beset by the worst of trials, only half-equipped by nature to withstand them, giving way sometimes, but always turning back to courage and sacrifice each for each. When eyebrows are raised and good men frown over "poor Charles Lamb's weaknesses," the strongest will be none the weaker for remembering and saying with all his heart the line from Wordsworth's poem on the death of his friend:

"Oh, he was good, if e'er a good man lived!"

a heavy cold, and died after a short illness on the 22d of December, 1880.

In many respects *Silas Marner* is the most distinctive of the novels. Here George Eliot is at her best. The didactic habit had not yet overcome the artistic impulse; and there are fewer of those passages of dissertation than in the later works. The author pauses less frequently to preach in the midst of her story. The tale is more gracious, too, more sweet and winning, less gloomy than any other. It is rounded out to the designs of poetic justice; and the shadow of human tragedy is mitigated somewhat on those natural pages. It is complete in design and admirably constructed, a masterpiece where we may study our author in small compass.

And perhaps one of the most salient features of this work, as of all her novels, is an ample Shakespearian humor. The very characteristic which is lacking in her essays crops out here in abundance. For George Eliot is preëminently one of those to whom nothing human can ever be alien. For abstract wrong she has no pity; the occasional triumphs of evil can move her to no sardonic laughter, nor put her even for a moment at the pessimists' point of view. But whenever her fellow-beings are concerned, or the almost living creatures of her brain, she is all mercy and sympathy and lovingkindness. Not once does she ridicule their follies, nor belittle the meanest of them all. She loves them too well ever to make fun of them behind their back. That rasping satire of Thackeray's is no part of her method. And when she would move us to smiles, there is no malice, no superiority, in her voice, as we seem to hear her say, "How delightful, how absurd a

thing is humanity!" Open the leaves of *Silas Marner*, at chapter six, and read how the landlord

"broke silence by saying, in a doubtful tone, to his cousin, the butcher, —

"'Some folks 'ud say that was a fine beast you druv in yesterday, Bob?'

"The butcher, a jolly, smiling, red-haired man, was not disposed to answer rashly. He gave a few puffs before he spat, and replied, —

"'And they would n't be fur wrong, John.'

"After this feeble delusive thaw, the silence set in as severely as before."

That is George Eliot's typical humor, so delicious, so dry. And again, turn to the beginning of chapter thirteen, and read of Uncle Kimball,

"who, being always volatile in sober business hours, became intense and bitter over cards and brandy, shuffled before his adversary's deal with a glare of suspicion, and turned up a mean trump-card with an air of inexpressible disgust, as if in a world where such things could happen one might as well enter on a course of reckless profligacy."

Ah, that glare of suspicion, how well we all know it! What harmless mirth it arouses! What chords of tolerant sweet reasonableness it touches in our own breast! So that, "feeling kindly unto all the earth," we are put in a mood which lies close to reverence. For worship, first of all, demands absence of self-righteousness and more than justice to others. Ridicule is never far from malignity, but aspiration in well-doing must always be near to humor such as this. It is not in George Eliot to sneer at the coxcomb, or to caricature the simple. When her country folk are ludicrous, we perceive that pathos, not contempt, surrounds the short-comings of beauty. The sadness of

imperfection lurks beneath incongruity's broadest smile. The sorry figure bears its sorry heart.

And so one thinks of George Eliot as a moralist before all else, supremely concerned with the ethical significance of life. As the artistic temperament takes color and complexion from its environment, and transfuses them into emotion, so the scientific temperament takes its acquired bias and conviction, and reproduces them in philosophy; and George Eliot was a scientist to the core. A large intelligence was her dominant characteristic. However keenly she might feel, she could always see more keenly still. She not only had the creative imagination which brought forth those children of her brain; she had the piercing gift of analysis as well. So that more than any other English novelist, when her characters were once born, she had the power of probing to the quick all their secret impulses and springs of action. Her instinct for dramatic scenes was unerring; and her dissection of motive, as merciless as some process of nature. She went to the core of a human problem not so much by the peculiarly feminine power of sympathy as by the virile power of a capacious and deductive mind. She saw clearly the inevitable logic of events, and meted out to the puppets of her stage the fateful consequences of their own deeds. To trace the growth of character, and in tracing it to exhibit the profound influence of act and habit on self-development, — this was her great aim. The gradual and cumulative corruption of weakness and self-indulgence in Tito Melema in *Romola* is an instance in point. That all character is a growth from conduct is her corollary to the the orem of evolution, that all physical life is a growth from its natural and primitive surroundings.

Skeptic as she is, placing no faith in a paternal deity or a personal immortality, she must find her sanctions for right altogether outside the accepted encouragements of revelation. Religion in its established forms had for her no authority; her deepest convictions led her to adhere to the rationalistic principles into which she had been drawn, and to abandon wholly the evangelical teaching of her childhood. The impress of that teaching on her spirit, however, was indelible. It was her mind only that changed; not her temper nor purpose. Considering, then, how strong was her moral sense, how it had been fostered and quickened by her early training, how it had been upheld by the severe surroundings of her non-conformist relatives and associates, one perceives at once how great would be her need to find in this newer creed of science some incentive, some logical support, to take the place of that which she had lost. And in all her writings this moral design is always uppermost; under her hands the novel with a purpose assumed its prominent rank in the world of art.

Consider, in *Silas Marner*, how the meshes of his own netting are slowly drawn around Godfrey Cass; how the filaments of his shifty deceit, each frangible as gossamer in itself, are little by little twisted into a wain-rope about his heart. Naturally frank and simple in disposition, he has tampered with truth as a child might tamper with the gearing of a mill wheel. By a single touch the awful machinery of the universe has been set in motion, and at first he stands half aghast at the result of his daring, while the hurrying whirl of events runs faster and faster, until it is past his power to retard, and suddenly he is caught in its dizzying maze and swept to a well-nigh inevitable

doom. We behold in the merciless consequences of our own volition a scourging genie more terrible than ever poor fisherman set free from copper jar, — impalpable as smoke, huge as the sky. This incorruptible Nemesis stalks through the novels of George Eliot, dealing retribution with implacable hand. It is the nameless, agnostic Providence, at whose threshold, with her "keen sense of the infinite hunger of the spirit, which nothing human could appease," she sought consolation in her religious need. In the shadow of that mighty face all her fancy's people dwell.

And surely, when we have once recognized her position, and put ourselves for a moment at her point of view, looking out upon a world presided over by no more individual and loving divinity than this, a world of iron chance and more than doubtful struggle, we cannot stint our admiration for the great nobility of mind which made George Eliot an ethical enthusiast with a fervor for right equal to Newman's or Savonarola's own. And yet, when this is said, there was always wanting in her the last touch of wonder, the subtile *presto* of all the wizardries of the soul, transmuting conviction into faith. Her poetry reveals this lack. It is full of high purpose, and yet it never rises above the temperature of cold prose. The rapture is not there. It is poetry by courtesy, and by virtue of metre alone. She has the prose-master's gift, to persuade us to her view, never the poet's power of wrapping us away beyond the limits of thought into the verges of profounder being. Her passion for good is a desperation rather than a joy. And this want of spiritual rapture, this predominance of the purely mental faculty, will always tend more

and more to diminish George Eliot's force as a great writer. When we think of Wordsworth and Tennyson, of Emerson and Browning, to speak only of modern guides of thought, we perceive that they were "friends and aiders of those who live in the spirit" in a more positive and stimulating way than George Eliot. George Eliot had nothing of the mystic; she never ventures beyond the reach of logic and admirable sense; while from these men we receive "intimations of immortality" and hints of another existence than that of patent fact.

But, indeed, this is hardly more than to say that George Eliot is not a poet. In a novelist, perhaps, one should only look for other traits. It is his business to bring together before us the people of our own world, faithfully and typically portrayed, appealing to us by their very naturalness, and then to reveal in the history of their lives the causes of their happiness or misfortune. True, such an aim is didactic; but all art is didactic, though it will teach more effectively by example than by precept. For beauty, which is the earth's great "ensample to godly life," is only the embodiment of human aspiration; is, indeed, only another aspect of goodness. George Eliot, therefore, in drawing all her materials from the life about her, in using only the obvious sources of knowledge, in avoiding any supernatural authority for conduct, was true to an artistic instinct as well as to her personal creed. This unflinching devotion to the truth, as she saw it, a characteristic of hers in common with many disciples of rationalism, was well calculated to aid her in the task of novel-writing. It made her the most eminent of English realists. For, paradox though it be, in this last half century we have come to hold in

highest esteem that fiction which is nearest to fact. The Victorian age has had a passion for reality, if not for truth. Its socialistic, democratic drift is bearing it away from the fictitious distinctions of rank and wealth. Character, personal worth, integrity are slowly coming to have more and more weight with men, to be restored (or perhaps we should say elevated) to their proper value in the world's estimation. To insist on the value of character, on the absolute necessity of right conduct, the untainted culture of the heart, as the only aim of life, the only assurance of happiness, is the whole of George Eliot's teaching. And here, with all the limitations of her skepticism, merely finding new sanctions for an old law, reëstablishing, as it were, ancient temples to The Good upon foundations but recently discovered, her lessons are at one with the utterances from Olivet and Sinai.

BLISS CARMAN

THE STUDY OF SILAS MARNER

THE ideal work of art may be defined as the sensible presentation of some noble idea, or group of related ideas, in such a manner that there shall be a perfect adaptation of the form to the conception and a perfect expression of the conception through the form. All true works of art are attempts to attain this ideal, but many elements enter into the expression of any conception in form, whether the medium be marble, or color, or sweet sounds linked in harmony, or that most subtle of all arts, literary expression. Thus it happens that a work of art can seldom be pronounced unqualifiedly good. It may excel in the power of its conception and be deficient in almost every detail of the execution; or the idea to be presented may lack unity, or those qualities which alone make it universal, while the skill shown in its presentation is of the finest.

Especially is this true in works of fiction. Certain qualities the work of fiction must have to lift it into the domain of art. A bright schoolgirl or a garrulous old man may tell a rambling, disconnected story, but printer's ink will never give it the smallest claim to consideration or the least chance of permanence. A great work of fiction must contain a central artistic purpose, sometimes called the theme and sometimes the *motif;* the dramatic presentation of this artistic purpose constitutes the plot; the characters and incidents are determined by the conditions necessary for the development of the theme through the plot

There are, further, numberless accessories to the narrative which must be chosen and arranged with the same exactness and nicety as for the stage, and which may be called the setting. All these matters, and many others, belong to the structure of the work of fiction; there is, besides, the question of style, which in itself includes many qualities and is of such vital importance that a novel lacking this charm will either fail in the first instance, or lapse into oblivion after a brief popularity.

The critical faculty consists in the ability to detect and separate distinct qualities in accordance with fundamental principles of art. There is no easy path for the acquisition of critical acumen. It results by slow processes of growth from thoughtful acquaintance with many works of art. Each work of art has its share in removing the mind imperceptibly from the narrow and provincial point of view and in broadening the intellectual life. In the end, there must result a certain power, not to be gained in any other manner, of perceiving artistic principles and of appreciating beauty and strength. This power is like a new sense, and the secret of it is something that no book contains and no instruction can impart; while time lasts, it can be won only at first hand through immediate contact with great art.

In the domain of fiction nothing is more effectual for the development of the critical judgment than the study of individual novels from the creative point of view. The careful study, step by step, of one great novel will prepare the mind for comparing and estimating critically different works of fiction. This study is not in itself criticism, although at every step it suggests the critical comparison of one work with

another; indeed, it differs widely from criticism in that it invites the reader into the author's sanctum, where he may see the working plans, the devices employed, the gradual emergence of the work of art. In fine, he becomes a sharer in the enthusiasm of creative genius and a witness of the infinite patience of labor, by which alone a great work of art is produced.

The topics for study which accompany the present edition of "Silas Marner" have been prepared in the hope that they will lead to careful, intelligent study of the text from the creative point of view. The important thing is not what the author said, but the plan in pursuance of which she said it. This novel is a remarkable illustration of construction in accordance with artistic principles. It may almost be considered typical in its essential characteristics. It contains an artistic purpose, or theme; a main plot, devised to present this theme in dramatic form by clearly defined steps; an underplot, perfectly subordinated to the main purpose of the story; and characters chosen and developed with reference to the presentation of the theme through the action. Moreover, all the details of the narrative, the descriptions, the setting of the story, the adaptation of part to part, show the finest skill and, by the simplest means, give to the whole rare unity and beauty. George Eliot once wrote of one of her works of fiction: "I believe there is scarcely a phrase, an incident, an allusion, that did not gather its value to me from its supposed subservience to my main artistic objects." These words express an essential part of her creed in regard to the art of fiction and indicate the standard of excellence which the author of "Silas Marner" set before herself. When she had acquired her manner and began to

work in accordance with theories of art, she exercised the utmost self-restraint and patience in the effort to realize this ideal in her novels. For this reason it is that her work will bear the closest scrutiny; the critic and the would-be writer may acquire by careful study of her methods knowledge of laws of artistic construction and of principles of criticism of wide application. There is not an incident, not a character study, not a description, in one of her great novels that can be satisfactorily discussed apart from its relation to the entire dramatic presentation of the narrative. If any one doubts this, let him attempt to state categorically the reasons, in the author's mind, for any incident or conversation, or description in one of her best works. Why did she attribute an epileptic tendency to Silas Marner? Why, in "Romola," did she introduce Bernardo del Nero on the occasion of Tito's first visit to the blind scholar and his daughter? Why, in "The Mill on the Floss," were Maggie's books included in the auction of the household gods of the Tulliver family?

The real beginning of a narrative is not always found upon the first page of a book. It may be approached by a description of the scenes in which the action is to take place, or the leading characters may be introduced to the reader at once, or the story may open with the presentation of information essential for understanding the tale. A favorite manner of opening a book is found in the narration of some striking incident which arrests the attention of the reader and perhaps contains the real starting-point of the action. In "Daniel Deronda," George Eliot chooses to begin her novel with such an incident, although she does not resume the narrative again until the twenty-first

chapter. The intervening pages are wholly filled with information about that part ot the lives of her characters which preceded the beginning of the dramatic action.

In "Silas Marner" there are fewer pages between the beginning of the action and its continuation, but the plan is the same. The story opens, and then the reader is told those things about the past life of the hero which are essential to an understanding of the condition in which he is found. The story of Silas, however, opens in a manner different from that of most novels, in that the starting-point of the action is not presented to the reader by the narration of an incident, but is found in a description of a man's mental and moral condition, so simple and unobtrusive that, on the first reading, it usually fails to arrest the attention.

Aristotle defines the beginning and the end of an action in this way: "A beginning is that which does not itself follow anything by causal necessity, but after which something is or naturally comes to be. An end, on the contrary, is that which itself naturally follows some other thing, either by necessity or in the regular course of events, but has nothing following it." Now, a beginning is usually presented to the reader in the form of some important incident or circumstance which exercises decisive influence upon the action that follows. In "Silas Marner," however, George Eliot takes as the beginning of the real action the condition of this poor man. For this reason the real starting-point of the narrative is not readily apparent; indeed, it is only by referring to the artistic purpose which the author had in view that we are able to decide where the beginning must be. The action

begins with this feeble life in process of slow death, and must proceed to show, either the completion of this process, or its arrest and Silas's return, through some agency, to a more natural and better life.

But, it is objected, the first scenes to which we are really introduced are in Lantern Yard, and have to do with Silas's youth. Moreover, the false accusation which he then suffered was the starting-point of his sad degeneration, and thus of the experiences of his later life. This is true, but nevertheless the incidents of Silas's early life belong to a narrative antecedent to the one George Eliot wishes to tell, and are introduced here merely because they are artistically necessary to account for the condition in which we find him. If the author's purpose has to do with the return of Silas to a natural and good life, then the story must open by giving the reader the clearest possible conception of the condition in which he is, and this must be followed by a reasonable explanation of the manner in which he came into this condition.

The critical question for consideration at this point is whether the author has succeeded in giving such an explanation of the mental state and manner of life of this man that the reader will accept his condition as inevitably arising from his earlier experiences.

It is also a requirement of art that later developments in the narrative must seem natural and probable through their relation to earlier traits of character or experiences. There must be careful preparation from the very beginning for that which is to come; each step in the development of the plot should seem to have grown out of all that has preceded it. Without preparation, incidents intended to be tragic, pathetic, or decisive in the plot may fail of due effect;

with it, the simplest act may rise to the dignity of a climax. In "Silas Marner," the mysterious rigidity, the habitual industry of the weaver, are significant chiefly as preparation, and the love of the poor man for the little sister who died becomes at once, when revealed to the reader, a part of his conception of Silas's character in early life, and explains the readiness with which he assumes the burden of the child's support.

Every work of art, whether it be statue, painting, poem, or novel, represents an artistic conception, the product of creative genius, for which, by every means, the author seeks adequate expression. The winged Hermes is a messenger; the Sistine Madonna shadows forth the artist's conception of the divinity consecrating the soul of the woman who had borne the Christ-child. In all the artist's effort one single purpose directs every choice; there exists in his mind an ideal, the soul of his conception, which is to him something holy and imperative. Color has no beauty except as it bodies forth in the eyes of men his vision. Words, characters, incidents, are selected or rejected solely for the sake of their relation to his purpose, which thus shapes for itself a form of expression. In the poem or the novel we call the artistic purpose which determines the choice of characters and the course of the action the theme or *motif*. In some works of fiction the theme may be found in the introduction, or upon the first page; in others it may be inferred at an early stage from the trend of the narrative; occasionally the true *motif* does not appear until the action approaches the climax; a clue demanding the closest attention, leading, meantime. toward the author's arcanum.

In "Silas Marner" the theme is apparent from the beginning of the story. George Eliot, more often than other novelists, confides the secrets of her art to the discerning reader. Here and there, in all her novels, are lines which might have been taken from the working plans in her note-book, so clearly do they define the artistic conception in her mind. Sometimes, as in "The Mill on the Floss," the statement of her theme is contained in a single illuminating passage; in other books it is found in different places in the narrative, in sentences so correspondent in meaning that there can be no mistake in the interpretation. The most complete statement in a single passage of the artistic purpose in "Silas Marner," is, however, found in a letter of the author to her publisher. George Eliot writes of this book: "I don't wonder at your finding my story, as far as you have read it, rather sombre. . . . But I hope you will not find it at all a sad story, as a whole, since it sets — or is intended to set — in a strong light the remedial influences of pure, natural human relations."

Many passages in "Silas Marner" read like a commentary on this statement. The sentences which follow are of this kind, and indicate clearly the unfolding of the author's purpose: "The light of his faith quite put out, and his affections made desolate, he had clung with all the force of his nature to his work and his money; and, like all objects to which a man devotes himself, they had fashioned him into correspondence with themselves. His loom, as he wrought in it without ceasing, had in its turn wrought on him, and confirmed more and more the monotonous craving for its monotonous response. His gold, as he hung over it and saw it grow, gathered his power of loving together into a hard isolation like its own."

"Our consciousness rarely registers the beginning of a growth within us any more than without us; there have been many circulations of the sap before we detect the smallest sign of the bud."

"The fountains of human love and of faith in a divine love had not yet been unlocked, and his soul was still the shrunken rivulet, with only this difference, that this little groove of sand was blocked up, and it wandered confusedly against dark obstruction."

"Eh, my precious child. The blessing was mine. If you had n't been sent to me I should ha' gone to the grave in my misery. The money was taken away from me in time."

In order to give literary expression to this theme it was necessary that the author should select as the central figure of the story a person leading a barren and desolate life under the dominance of some vice or passion which shut out all good influences, a person without faith, without human affection. It was also necessary that the evil influence should have been imposed by circumstances upon a nature naturally possessed of good qualities and accustomed for a time to their exercise, in order that the remedial agency chosen might waken within the man some faint, well-nigh extinguished inclination to good. Only from within may a life attain the natural and wholesome soundness that George Eliot had in mind as her goal. Some remedial agency was, however, as necessary as is the light for the putting forth of the germ folded within the seed, and George Eliot chose a little child as the influence best calculated to excite again natural human emotions in this poor old man of narrowed mind and heart. With utmost care she has prepared the reader to expect the effect of the child's entrance.

The miser had once a little sister, tenderly loved, and when he saw the child sleeping on his hearth there stirred in his confused mind "a hurrying influx of memories," which moved him to long-forgotten habits of tenderness.

In the recovery of Silas, the first step, undoubtedly, was the loss of his gold. The great shock it gave arrested his habit of life and opened the way for new influences. With wondrous skill the author has indicated every step of the change resulting from his loss. He was forced to tell his trouble to his neighbors, whom he had long shunned; in the moment of accusing Jem a feeling of compunction, born of the knowledge that he had once been accused wrongfully, stirred in his heart; his trouble and his evident helplessness at once placed him in kindlier relations with his neighbors; he began in a feeble way to expect help from some unknown source; and, finally, the stirring of old impulses resulted in a poor attempt to return Dolly's good-will. All these movements in Silas's nature preceded the coming of the child; they were all in the right direction, but would have proved abortive without the vivifying human love which Eppie wakened in his heart.

The manner of Eppie's coming into the house of Silas Marner admirably illustrates George Eliot's habit of intimately connecting each part of her narrative with every other, so that whatever befalls occurs naturally in a series of events, all closely connected with the ordinary course of the life depicted. To this end, the author first impressed upon the reader the simple religious character of Marner's mind, and showed how fervently he had been attached to the friends of his youth. In the very act of depicting the

narrow, sordid miser she showed that his love of gold, in its origin, was only a habit of clinging, transferred from the friends who had betrayed him to the inanimate metal, and then riveted upon his soul through the necessity he felt for some kind of activity. Upon first thought, it would seem that the footsteps of the wandering little waif tottered to his fireside by the merest chance, yet the author has made this chance seem probable by attention to the smallest details; the absence of Silas, the open door, even the reason which prevented his turning the key in the door as usual, were all small circumstances in the simplest and most natural series of events. His near-sightedness had also its part to play in a result so finely calculated that, like the events of real life, its exact turn was dependent upon many complex influences. In the very simplicity and homeliness of its details, this incident shows, as a more elaborate plot could not, the care with which George Eliot habitually prepared for each part of her narrative.

Nor was she less careful or analytic in noting the results springing from the immediate contact of an affectionate, trusting child with a life so isolated and narrow as that of the miser. First, an old habit of tenderness reawakened, and his affection expended itself upon Eppie for the sake of another little one, long since returned to dust. This led him, for reasons which he could not explain, to keep the child and assume the burden of her support, which act was decisive in the development of the plot. Toward the moment of this decision everything from the beginning of the narrative tended; had it been different, the theme chosen by the author could not have been illustrated; and after the decision, every incident to

the end of the first book is seen to flow naturally from the choice made. The women of Raveloe bestowed an active sympathy upon the poor man who had undertaken, in utter ignorance of the magnitude of his task, the care of a little girl. As a result, the visits of wholesome Dolly Winthrop became a permanent and positive influence in the little household of Silas. One thing followed another. He consented to the christening, lest the child should be exposed to some unknown evil through his neglect. This brought him into connection with the church, and made him one of the community, attendant upon services common to all. The necessity for constant watchfulness and penetration in caring for the child stimulated mental faculties long dormant; his memory began to return; he collected herbs as of old, and little threads of human interest connected his life more and more closely with the lives of his neighbors as he travelled among them, carrying his foster child on his shoulder and delivering his finely woven webs of cloth. Slowly his mind began to travel along the future; he foresaw that in a few years the welfare of his child would depend upon many things beyond his providing, and he tried in his dull way to understand and share the life of the little village, that he might presently make it helpful to her. And during all this time, while his every effort and thought were given to fostering a waif of unknown parentage, he himself was led gently forth toward a calm and bright land by the hand of a little child.

The artistic purpose in the underplot of "Silas Marner" serves as a kind of background or contrast to the *motif* of the main plot. In the story of Marner's life the author wishes to illustrate the remedial

influences of pure, simple human relations in winning the soul from a narrow and sordid existence. In the life of Godfrey Cass she intended to emphasize the Nemesis resulting from failure to fulfil the obligations belonging to marriage and fatherhood. After many years, Godfrey's slow mind perceived the connection between his own acts and their inevitable result, and he said: "There 's debts we can't pay like money debts, by paying extra for the years that have slipped by." The purpose of making each plot supplement the other artistically guided the author in the selection of incidents and characteristics; she exercised the greatest self-restraint in the subordination of one theme to the other, excluding all irrelevant material, and thus secured the peculiar unity and artistic perfection of "Silas Marner."

As the main plot opens with a condition, the under plot opens with a character, the traits of which determine the development of the action. Godfrey's character is so natural and commonplace that it suggests the type rather than the life study of the individual, the entanglements which involved the young man are those that the reader has expected from the first moment of his introduction. His weaknesses and his good qualities alike combine in complicating his situation. His desire to make up for a wrong once committed leads him into the clandestine marriage; his indecision and his lack of courage place him at the mercy of his less scrupulous brother. Unwittingly he is an important part of the train of circumstances that bring about the theft of the miser's gold. At this point the action of the underplot first becomes essential to the development of the main plot.

The uncritical reader feels, as the story goes on, that

Godfrey was skilfully protected from the natural consequences of his own self-indulgence and indecision, but nothing could illustrate more forcibly the artistic requirement in the mind of the author than this very immunity from the ordinary penalties of dissipation. His character was compounded of kindly and good qualities, mingled with negative characteristics. He was capable of sincere affection, and when he was forced into acts which injured others he felt an honest regret and a desire to atone, in some degree, for the wrong. He lived in constant fear of betrayal, both Dunstan and his low-bred wife threatened him, and his father's urgency about his marriage with Nancy was a danger no less imminent. Then, in the moment of bitter consciousness that his own folly had rendered hopeless a worthy love, kind fate intervened, and by the opportune death of his wife and the continued absence of his brother made it possible for him to live in accordance with his better inclinations. But in the very moment of his freedom, a new need of that decision of character which he lacked came upon him. The claim of his own orphaned child pressed on his heart. On the other side was Nancy and his heirship to the estate of the old squire; he acted in accordance with the habit of years in remaining a silent witness while the weaver in his poverty offered a home to the unknown waif, and this negative decision proved in all his after-life the canker-worm at the heart of his rose.

In the resolution of Marner to adopt Eppie, of Godfrey to remain silent when he should have owned and provided for her, we find the connection of the two plots and the decisive moment in each. In the case of each life this decision was important in determin-

ing its after-course. From it sprang, one by one, the remedial influences which, in the end, restored Marner to fellowship with men and faith in God; and the memory of it lay like a dry rot at the heart of Godfrey's happiness, until at length the simple religious nature of his wife saddened with a sense of something lacking in her husband's content. It is rare, in the construction of a work of fiction, that the decisive moments of the main plot and of the underplot coincide exactly, and seldom is the underplot so perfectly subordinated to the main purpose of the author as in the present instance. By removing from Godfrey's life all the difficulties and embarrassments that ordinarily result from such conduct as his, George Eliot has isolated the single influence that she desired to emphasize. He obtained the wife of his love, and all outward obstacles to a sincere and worthy life were removed from his path; there remained simply his denial of the obligation of a parent to cherish and care for his own. The result of this act working slowly through his inner consciousness would have been obscure to the reader had Godfrey suffered also from the manifest difficulties of disinheritance poverty, and their resultant train of evils.

There is also in the two plots a remarkable similarity. The main plot opens with a condition, and works toward a decisive act, which determines the later course of the narrative. The underplot opens with the presentation of certain traits of character as the starting-point of its action, and proceeds through conditions naturally resulting from the connection between the character presented and the circumstances of the man's life, to the decision which also influences the later course of its action. It is a criti-

cal requirement that, as the narrative advances, the action of the underplot must be more and more intimately connected with that of the main plot, and more essential to its course; the subordination of the one to the other must also be more evident, so that the interest of the reader is gradually merged in the principal characters, and the impression of the leading *motif* becomes predominant. From the moment of climax in the first book, the narrative of each plot must tend toward some final climax, which must be, in some sense, the conclusion of the action, after which the presentation of results, the completion of the analyses, the finishing touches of the pictures, alone remain, before the novelist rings the curtain down upon the scenes and persons evoked in the world of the imagination.

The opening of the second book of "Silas Marner" is a fine illustration of George Eliot's habit of presenting with utmost faithfulness the ordinary medium in which a character moves as the preliminary to some important event which is to affect the person profoundly. Thus, in this simple story, she begins the second part with a picture, almost idyllic in its quiet beauty and naturalness, of the manner in which Silas and Eppie were wont to pass the Sabbath. Save for the conversation with which the chapter closes, the homely incidents of this day might stand for those of any other Sabbath afternoon in the year.

It is true that with the skill of the artist she selects precisely those features of the two lives which best represent essential characteristics. The persons, Silas, Eppie, Mrs. Winthrop, and Aaron, are those whose intercourse has been most intimate during the previous years. The every-day details touched upon

suggest to the reader many changes in the life and character of Silas in the time since the last incidents narrated. He is tranquilly happy, and has adopted with humble acquiescence the customs of village life. He is no more the isolated, suspected miser; he has been restored to human fellowship, and is one of a kindly community whose interests and obligations are mutual. He has also recovered, with the return of his memory, a sense of unity between his present and his past life. It is true that the matter of the lots, and of the cruel suspicion which his appeal to Heaven had failed to remove, has remained dark; but it is clear, even to him, that the loss of his gold has been a blessing, and, turning over and over in his slow way, the events of the past, he feels that there might still come to him an explanation of their dark mystery, which would justify Providence, so long inscrutable, to his mind. And, finally, the author adds to the story of these quiet lives, centred in matters of no greater moment than a bed of sweet-smelling lavender or a potato pie, the touch which prepares the reader for future events of importance. The conversations about the gold and about Eppie's marriage remind the reader of the deepest experiences of the weaver's past life, and also point forward to the approaching climax of the action.

It is pertinent to inquire here why the novelist should narrate with great care the events of a few months, and then pass over years with the scanty illumination of a few paragraphs, and yet again select for careful presentation a few short weeks. Why should the years be omitted? Why should the weeks be chosen? Let us remember that not every life is worth representation in fiction, and that in the lives

whose story holds for the world some revelation of humanity, not every part is of equal importance. Nor is it always the stirring events or the dramatic moments that are most significant in the story. It is rather the slow trend of the life which is hidden from the daily companions of the man or woman — nay, often from the person himself, until, looking back in after years, he perceives it — that should be revealed by the novelist's art in connection with the experiences which determine its course or the events through which it is manifested. In this respect life as it is depicted in fiction differs from real life. In real life we see events and the manifestations of character, but we only guess blindly what the hidden springs of action may be, and in rare instances, after years, perceive the course of the inner life. The novelist, gifted with true insight, presents in most intimate connection both views of the life; — the view of those living in closest touch with its daily course, from whom the future is hidden, and the later view of those who come upon the secret motives, and witness the result of courses of action or thought, which have extended through years. In order to present this double view of a human life, the author must seize upon those moments of experience which have determining force upon the inner life, or are the initiation of a series of events, each tending toward some important result. He must animate exciting incidents with a deeper meaning, by revealing their bearing upon life issues. In the most complex situations he must, in ways so subtle that none but the closest student will perceive them, indicate the trend of the narrative, connect all with originating causes, and suggest remote results.

This definition of the double purpose in the work of the novelist or the dramatist will guide us to the principles in accordance with which he selects the incidents of his story, and here a concrete illustration will be more useful than any abstract discussion. In the life of Silas Marner, the loss of his gold and the adoption of Eppie determined both the outward events and the inner course of his life for many years. The author, having clearly set before us these incidents, and indicated their significance through a revelation of the causes which had wrought to produce the miser's state of mind, could very well pass over the years in which results slowly came to pass. In the life of Godfrey Cass his refusal of the obligation, when he "shirked doing a father's part," became a hidden canker corroding all his happiness, although even his wife perceived nothing more than the outward manifestation of this secret bitterness.

At length there came an hour in the life of the poor weaver, and also in that of the prosperous squire, which revealed to each the significance of acts long past. To Silas came a time of trial which tested to the uttermost the regenerated humanity of his heart. The discovery of the skeleton in the stone-pits impressed upon Godfrey the futility of concealing any kind of wrongdoing, and at last crystallized his hesitating inclination into action. In haste, lest his old vacillation should return upon him, he told the story of his past life to his wife. It would seem that the climax of the underplot must be reached when the husband realized "the bitterness of an error that was not simply futile, but had defeated its own end," but not so. There was to come a deeper sense of the responsibility of the human soul for its own deeds. The

two seek the weaver, united in their determination to make reparation, certain that by stretching forth the hand to take it they may win the coveted blessing, as if no dark years of concealment intervened between the present and the first imperative obligation. But they meet with an unexpected obstacle in the child herself. Gratitude and the simplest ties of human love outweigh in her heart the mere fact of blood relationship with a man who had denied the inner bond. The human, physical tie counts with her not one whit; she feels that her true father is the man who took her in and sheltered her, and shared his all with a nameless outcast.

There is a fine touch of artistic skill in placing Eppie's betrothal before the visit of Nancy and the squire. This betrothal linked her life inseparably with the lives of the working people among whom she had been reared. It was not merely the outward conditions of her life which allied her with them; her very spirit was fashioned of the same warp and woof of habit, interest, and love. This revelation was final to Godfrey. Here lies the climax of the underplot; the conclusion of a long experience is found in Godfrey's recognition of the Nemesis of his own denial of the obligation of fatherhood. The climax is definitely marked in his words to Nancy upon their return to their childless home: "That 's ended! . . . There 's debts we can't pay like money debts by paying extra for the years that have slipped by."

The climax of the underplot of "Silas Marner" marks also its final subordination to the main plot. The real purpose of Godfrey's visit to the weaver's hut, as, indeed, of the story of his life, is found in the test thus made of Silas's character. A preliminary

test of his changed habit of thought had been made in the return of the gold, which had no power over him, although it lay outspread upon the table. The squire's proposal to adopt Eppie presents itself as an appeal to his unselfish love for his foster child. Since the hour when he first saw her bright head resting beside his hearth, his every thought had been for her. Would he hesitate now to give her up should her welfare demand the sacrifice? There could be no better evidence of the extent to which the author has brought these lowly lives within our comprehension and sympathy than the interest with which we watch the struggle in the poor weaver's heart. We feel that the issue is great, unmindful that the chief actors are poor working people, whose lives would in the real world scarcely brush our own. We feel his violent trembling, his silence, as if the light of his life were fading into darkness, and hear the faint words which mark the victory of a human soul. But the climax is not yet reached. In accordance with the habit of her mind, George Eliot tests this soul to the uttermost of its strength, that no one may say, "It might have failed had the stress been greater." After the relief of Eppie's affectionate refusal and the happiness of this new proof that her love belonged wholly to him, Silas learned that Godfrey Cass claimed the right of a father to provide for his own daughter; and finally his own conscience was echoed in words that reached his ear, accusing him of selfishness in withholding her from the home that her father offered. The whole course of the novel has tended to the few words that Silas Marner finally uttered, and the reader feels himself present at one of those supreme moments which focus in one resolution all the forces of the soul, all the tendencies of the life from least to greatest.

We seem at this point to discern the creative conception of the author, as it were, in the formation, so close does the climax of the underplot lie to that of the main plot, yet so distinct is one from the other. In the main plot the climax is found in the final unselfish renunciation of Silas; Eppie's words only mark his reward, the flooding back of life and hope into his soul. In the underplot these same words are the final blow to Godfrey's hope, and bring home to him the sense that his error in the past is irreparable.

It remains to inquire wherein the conclusion of each action lies. In the underplot it is found in the absence of Squire Cass from the wedding. That absence was necessary, since he had decided not to reveal in Raveloe his relationship with the bride. It was felt by himself as the bitter final act which separated from him the life of his own child. The conclusion of the main plot is found in the same incident — in the wedding. This it was which set the seal to Eppie's choice that she would remain among the people whose lot she had shared, and "fend" for the weaver in his failing strength. The course of the action of this brief story tends from a condition to a decisive act; from this decisive act again to a condition which results from the decision, and is at the other extreme from the first condition. Finally, we see the spirit of this man, whose life is narrow, whose powers are feeble, tried to the limit; we see him bewildered, fainting at the prospect of loss, but nevertheless following the faint inner light that has been given him; and when the little bridal party in the morning sunshine goes up the garden, fragrant with sweet, old-fashioned flowers, we know that these lowly lives have once more passed out of view and entered upon slow, happy

years, whose course has been determined in the brief scenes we have witnessed.

It may seem unnecessary that the author should send Silas Marner back to the scenes of his early life, but without this incident the reader would remain in doubt whether his later faith was stronger than his old doubts. Had he found the old places unchanged and established his innocence, there would have been no longer occasion for his faith; but the life of which he had been a part had dissolved into the larger life of the world; it no longer mattered to any mortal except himself whether he had been innocent or guilty. The ways of God remained dark to him, but out of the darkness has been reached the guiding hand of a little child, and we hear the last words of Silas Marner, the poor weaver of Raveloe, before he passes into the silence of a happy life, "I think I shall trusten till I die."

H. A. DAVIDSON.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE AND WORKS OF GEORGE ELIOT.

Born at Arbury Farm, Warwickshire, England, Nov. 22, 1819
Removed to Griff, March, 1820.
Sent to Miss Lathom's school, at Attleboro', in 1825.
Sent to Miss Wallington's school, at Nuneaton, about 1827.
Sent to Miss Franklin's school, at Coventry, in 1832.
Death of Mrs. Evans, Mary Ann left school, in 1836.
Marriage of Christiana Evans, in 1837.
First publication of verses by M. A. E., in the "Christian Observer," in 1840.
Removed to Foleshill Road, Coventry, in 1841.
Translation of "Leben Jesu" by Strauss, 1844–46.
Death of Robert Evans, May 31, 1849.
Spent a year at Geneva, 1849–50.
Became assistant editor of the "Westminster Review" in 1851.
Translation of Feuerbach's "Essence of Christianity," 1854.
Union with George Henry Lewes, 1854.
Contributed the Belles-Lettres section to the "Westminster Review," and wrote for "The Leader" and "The Saturday Review," 1855–56.
Began to write fiction, 1856.
"Scenes from Clerical Life," published 1858.
"The Lifted Veil," finished in 1359.
"The Mill on the Floss," published 1860.
"Silas Marner," published 1861.
"Romola," published 1863.
"Felix Holt," published 1866.
"Spanish Gypsy," published 1868.
"Agatha," published 1869.
"How Lisa Loved the King," published 1869.
"Armgart," published 1870.
"Middlemarch," published 1872.
"Legend of Jubal and Other Poems," published 1874.
"Daniel Deronda," published 1876.
Death of George Henry Lewes, Nov. 28, 1878.
"The Impressions of Theophrastus Such," published 1879.
Married to J. W. Cross, May 6, 1880.
Died, Dec. 22, 1880.

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George Eliot, by Mathilde Blind, Famous Women Series.

English Authors in Florence, by Kate Field, Atlantic Monthly, December, 1864.

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Principles of Success in Literature, by G. H. Lewes.

Relation of Literature to Life, by C. D. Warner.

Some Aspects of Fiction, by Brander Matthews.

Criticism and Fiction, by W. D. Howells.

The Development of the English Novel, by W. L. Cross.

Some Principles of Literary Criticism, by C. L. Winchester.

SILAS MARNER:

THE WEAVER OF RAVELOE.

PART I.

CHAPTER I

In the days when the spinning-wheels hummed busily in the farmhouses — and even great ladies, clothed in silk and thread-lace, had their toy spinning-wheels of polished oak — there might be seen, in districts far away among the lanes, or deep in the bosom of the hills, certain pallid undersized men, who, by the side of the brawny country-folk, looked like the remnants of a disinherited race. The shepherd's dog barked fiercely when one of these alien-looking men appeared on the upland, dark against the early winter sunset; for what dog likes a figure bent under a heavy bag? — and these pale men rarely stirred abroad without that mysterious burden. The shepherd himself, though he had good reason to believe that the bag held nothing but flaxen thread, or else the long rolls of strong linen spun from that thread, was not quite sure that this trade of weaving, indispensable though it was, could be carried on entirely without the help of the Evil One. In that far-off time superstition clung easily round every person or thing that was at all unwonted, or even intermittent and occasional merely, like the visits of the pedlar or the knife-grinder.

No one knew where wandering men had their homes or their origin; and how was a man to be explained unless you at least knew somebody who knew his father and mother? To the peasants of old times, the world outside their own direct experience was a region of vagueness and mystery: to their untravelled thought a state of wandering was a conception as dim as the winter life of the swallows that came back with the spring; and even a settler, if he came from distant parts, hardly ever ceased to be viewed with a remnant of distrust, which would have prevented any surprise if a long course of inoffensive conduct on his part had ended in the commission of a crime; especially if he had any reputation for knowledge, or showed any skill in handicraft. All cleverness, whether in the rapid use of that difficult instrument the tongue, or in some other art unfamiliar to villagers, was in itself suspicious: honest folk, born and bred in a visible manner, were mostly not overwise or clever — at least, not beyond such a matter as knowing the signs of the weather; and the process by which rapidity and dexterity of any kind were acquired was so wholly hidden that they partook of the nature of conjuring. In this way it came to pass that those scattered linen-weavers — emigrants from the town into the country — were to the last regarded as aliens by their rustic neighbors, and usually contracted the eccentric habits which belong to a state of loneliness.

In the early years of this century, such a linen-weaver, named Silas Marner, worked at his vocation in a stone cottage that stood among the nutty hedgerows near the village of Raveloe, and not far from the edge of a deserted stone-pit. The questionable sound of Silas's loom, so unlike the natural cheerful trotting

of the winnowing-machine, or the simpler rhythm of the flail, had a half-fearful fascination for the Raveloe boys, who would often leave off their nutting or birds' nesting to peep in at the window of the stone cottage, counterbalancing a certain awe at the mysterious action of the loom by a pleasant sense of scornful superiority, drawn from the mockery of its alternating noises, along with the bent, tread-mill attitude of the weaver. But sometimes it happened that Marner, pausing to adjust an irregularity in his thread, became aware of the small scoundrels, and, though chary of his time, he liked their intrusion so ill that he would descend from his loom, and, opening the door, would fix on them a gaze that was always enough to make them take to their legs in terror. For how was it possible to believe that those large brown protuberant eyes in Silas Marner's pale face really saw nothing very distinctly that was not close to them, and not rather that their dreadful stare could dart cramp, or rickets, or a wry mouth at any boy who happened to be in the rear? They had, perhaps, heard their fathers and mothers hint that Silas Marner could cure folks' rheumatism if he had a mind, and add, still more darkly, that if you could only speak the devil fair enough, he might save you the cost of the doctor. Such strange lingering echoes of the old demon-worship might perhaps even now be caught by the diligent listener among the gray-haired peasantry; for the rude mind with difficulty associates the ideas of power and benignity. A shadowy conception of power that by much persuasion can be induced to refrain from inflicting harm, is the shape most easily taken by the sense of the Invisible in the minds of men who have always been pressed close by primitive wants, and to

whom a life of hard toil has never been illuminated by any enthusiastic religious faith. To them pain and mishap present a far wider range of possibilities than gladness and enjoyment: their imagination is almost barren of the images that feed desire and hope, but is all overgrown by recollections that are a perpetual pasture to fear. "Is there anything you can fancy that you would like to eat?" I once said to an old laboring man, who was in his last illness, and who had refused all the food his wife had offered him. "No," he answered, "I 've never been used to nothing but common victual, and I can't eat that." Experience had bred no fancies in him that could raise the phantasm of appetite.

And Raveloe was a village where many of the old echoes lingered, undrowned by new voices. Not that it was one of those barren parishes lying on the outskirts of civilization — inhabited by meagre sheep and thinly scattered shepherds: on the contrary, it lay in the rich central plain of what we are pleased to call Merry England, and held farms which, speaking from a spiritual point of view, paid highly desirable tithes. But it was nestled in a snug well-wooded hollow, quite an hour's journey on horseback from any turnpike, where it was never reached by the vibrations of the coach-horn or of public opinion. It was an important-looking village, with a fine old church and large churchyard in the heart of it, and two or three large brick-and-stone homesteads, with well-walled orchards and ornamental weathercocks, standing close upon the road, and lifting more imposing fronts than the rectory, which peeped from among the trees on the other side of the churchyard, — a village which showed at once the summits of its social life, and told the prac-

ised eye that there was no great park and manor-house in the vicinity, but that there were several chiefs in Raveloe who could farm badly quite at their ease, drawing enough money from their bad farming, in those war times, to live in a rollicking fashion, and keep a jolly Christmas, Whitsun, and Easter tide.

It was fifteen years since Silas Marner had first come to Raveloe; he was then simply a pallid young man, with prominent, short-sighted brown eyes, whose appearance would have had nothing strange for people of average culture and experience, but for the villagers near whom he had come to settle it had mysterious peculiarities which corresponded with the exceptional nature of his occupation and his advent from an unknown region called "North'ard." So had his way of life: — he invited no comer to step across his door-sill, and he never strolled into the village to drink a pint at the Rainbow, or to gossip at the wheelwright's; he sought no man or woman, save for the purposes of his calling, or in order to supply himself with necessaries; and it was soon clear to the Raveloe lasses that he would never urge one of them to accept him against her will — quite as if he had heard them declare that they would never marry a dead man come to life again. This view of Marner's personality was not without another ground than his pale face and unexampled eyes; for Jem Rodney, the mole-catcher, averred that, one evening as he was returning homeward, he saw Silas Marner leaning against a stile with a heavy bag on his back, instead of resting the bag on the stile as a man in his senses would have done; and that, on coming up to him, he saw that Marner's eyes were set like a dead man's, and he spoke to him, and shook him, and his limbs were stiff, and his hands clutched

the bag as if they 'd been made of iron; but just as he had made up his mind that the weaver was dead, he came all right again, like, as you might say, in the winking of an eye, and said "Good-night," and walked off. All this Jem swore he had seen, more by token that it was the very day he had been mole-catching on Squire Cass's land, down by the old saw-pit. Some said Marner must have been in a "fit," a word which seemed to explain things otherwise incredible; but the argumentative Mr. Macey, clerk of the parish, shook his head, and asked if anybody was ever known to go off in a fit and not fall down. A fit was a stroke, was n't it? and it was in the nature of a stroke to partly take away the use of a man's limbs and throw him on the parish, if he 'd got no children to look to. No, no; it was no stroke that would let a man stand on his legs, like a horse between the shafts, and then walk off as soon as you can say "Gee!" But there might be such a thing as a man's soul being loose from his body, and going out and in, like a bird out of its nest and back; and that was how folks got overwise, for they went to school in this shell-less state to those who could teach them more than their neighbors could learn with their five senses and the parson. And where did Master Marner get his knowledge of herbs from — and charms, too, if he liked to give them away? Jem Rodney's story was no more than what might have been expected by anybody who had seen how Marner had cured Sally Oates, and made her sleep like a baby, when her heart had been beating enough to burst her body for two months and more, while she had been under the doctor's care. He might cure more folks if he would; but he was worth speaking fair, if it was only to keep him from doing you a mischief.

It was partly to this vague fear that Marner was indebted for protecting him from the persecution that his singularities might have drawn upon him, but still more to the fact that, the old linen-weaver in the neighboring parish of Tarley being dead, his handicraft made him a highly welcome settler to the richer housewives of the district, and even to the more provident cottagers, who had their little stock of yarn at the year's end. Their sense of his usefulness would have counteracted any repugnance or suspicion which was not confirmed by a deficiency in the quality or the tale of the cloth he wove for them. And the years had rolled on without producing any change in the impressions of the neighbors concerning Marner, except the change from novelty to habit. At the end of fifteen years the Raveloe men said just the same things about Silas Marner as at the beginning; they did not say them quite so often, but they believed them much more strongly when they did say them. There was only one important addition which the years had brought: it was, that Master Marner had laid by a fine sight of money somewhere, and that he could buy up "bigger men" than himself.

But while opinion concerning him had remained nearly stationary, and his daily habits had presented scarcely any visible change, Marner's inward life had been a history and a metamorphosis, as that of every fervid nature must be when it has fled, or been condemned, to solitude. His life, before he came to Raveloe, had been filled with the movement, the mental activity, and the close fellowship, which, in that day as in this, marked the life of an artisan early incorporated in a narrow religious sect, where the poorest layman has the chance of distinguishing him

self by gifts of speech, and has, at the very least, the weight of a silent voter in the government of his community. Marner was highly thought of in that little hidden world, known to itself as the church assembling in Lantern Yard; he was believed to be a young man of exemplary life and ardent faith; and a peculiar interest had been centred in him ever since he had fallen, at a prayer-meeting, into a mysterious rigidity and suspension of consciousness, which, lasting for an hour or more, had been mistaken for death. To have sought a medical explanation for this phenomenon would have been held by Silas himself, as well as by his minister and fellow-members, a wilful self-exclusion from the spiritual significance that might lie therein. Silas was evidently a brother selected for a peculiar discipline; and though the effort to interpret this discipline was discouraged by the absence, on his part, of any spiritual vision during his outward trance, yet it was believed by himself and others that its effect was seen in an accession of light and fervor. A less truthful man than he might have been tempted into the subsequent creation of a vision in the form of resurgent memory; a less sane man might have believed in such a creation; but Silas was both sane and honest, though, as with many honest and fervent men, culture had not defined any channels for his sense of mystery, and so it spread itself over the proper pathway of inquiry and knowledge. He had inherited from his mother some acquaintance with medicinal herbs and their preparation, — a little store of wisdom which she had imparted to him as a solemn bequest, — but of late years he had had doubts about the lawfulness of applying this knowledge, believing that herbs could have no efficacy without prayer, and that prayer might suffice without

herbs; so that his inherited delight to wander through the fields in search of foxglove and dandelion and coltsfoot began to wear to him the character of a temptation.

Among the members of his church there was one young man, a little older than himself, with whom he had long lived in such close friendship that it was the custom of their Lantern Yard brethren to call them David and Jonathan. The real name of the friend was William Dane, and he, too, was regarded as a shining instance of youthful piety, though somewhat given to over-severity towards weaker brethren, and to be so dazzled by his own light as to hold himself wiser than his teachers. But whatever blemishes others might discern in William, to his friend's mind he was faultless; for Marner had one of those impressible self-doubting natures which, at an inexperienced age, admire imperativeness and lean on contradiction. The expression of trusting simplicity in Marner's face, heightened by that absence of special observation, that defenceless, deer-like gaze which belongs to large prominent eyes, was strongly contrasted by the self complacent suppression of inward triumph that lurked in the narrow slanting eyes and compressed lips of William Dane. One of the most frequent topics of conversation between the two friends was Assurance of salvation: Silas confessed that he could never arrive at anything higher than hope mingled with fear, and listened with longing wonder when William declared that he had possessed unshaken assurance ever since, in the period of his conversion, he had dreamed that he saw the words "calling and election sure" standing by themselves on a white page in the open Bible. Such colloquies have occupied many a pair of pale-faced

weavers, whose unnurtured souls have been like young winged things, fluttering forsaken in the twilight.

It had seemed to the unsuspecting Silas that the friendship had suffered no chill even from his formation of another attachment of a closer kind. For some months he had been engaged to a young servant woman, waiting only for a little increase to their mutual savings in order to their marriage; and it was a great delight to him that Sarah did not object to William's occasional presence in their Sunday interviews. It was at this point in their history that Silas's cataleptic fit occurred during the prayer-meeting; and amidst the various queries and expressions of interest addressed to him by his fellow-members, William's suggestion alone jarred with the general sympathy towards a brother thus singled out for special dealings. He observed that, to him, this trance looked more like a visitation of Satan than a proof of divine favor, and exhorted his friend to see that he hid no accursed thing within his soul. Silas, feeling bound to accept rebuke and admonition as a brotherly office, felt no resentment, but only pain, at his friend's doubts concerning him; and to this was soon added some anxiety at the perception that Sarah's manner towards him began to exhibit a strange fluctuation between an effort at an increased manifestation of regard and involuntary signs of shrinking and dislike. He asked her if she wished to break off their engagement; but she denied this: their engagement was known to the church, and had been recognized in the prayer-meetings; it could not be broken off without strict investigation, and Sarah could render no reason that would be sanctioned by the feeling of the community. At this time the senior deacon was taken dangerously ill, and, being a child

less widower, he was tended night and day by some of the younger brethren or sisters. Silas frequently took his turn in the night-watching with William, the one relieving the other at two in the morning. The old man, contrary to expectation, seemed to be on the way to recovery, when one night Silas, sitting up by his bedside, observed that his usual audible breathing had ceased. The candle was burning low, and he had to lift it to see the patient's face distinctly Examination convinced him that the deacon was dead — had been dead some time, for the limbs were rigid. Silas asked himself if he had been asleep, and looked at the clock: it was already four in the morning. How was it that William had not come? In much anxiety he went to seek for help, and soon there were several friends assembled in the house, the minister among them, while Silas went away to his work, wishing he could have met William to know the reason of his non-appearance. But at six o'clock, as he was thinking of going to seek his friend, William came, and with him the minister. They came to summon him to Lantern Yard, to meet the church members there; and to his inquiry concerning the cause of the summons the only reply was, "You will hear." Nothing further was said until Silas was seated in the vestry, in front of the minister, with the eyes of those who to him represented God's people fixed solemnly upon him. Then the minister, taking out a pocket-knife, showed it to Silas, and asked him if he knew where he had left that knife? Silas said he did not know that he had left it anywhere out of his own pocket — but he was trembling at this strange interrogation. He was then exhorted not to hide his sin, but to confess and repent. The knife had been found in the bureau by

the departed deacon's bedside — found in the place where the little bag of church money had lain, which the minister himself had seen the day before. Some hand had removed that bag; and whose hand could it be, if not that of the man to whom the knife belonged? For some time Silas was mute with astonishment; then he said, "God will clear me: I know nothing about the knife being there, or the money being gone. Search me and my dwelling: you will find nothing but three pound five of my own savings, which William Dane knows I have had these six months." At this William groaned, but the minister said, "The proof is heavy against you, brother Marner. The money was taken in the night last past, and no man was with our departed brother but you, for William Dane declares to us that he was hindered by sudden sickness from going to take his place as usual, and you yourself said that he had not come; and, moreover, you neglected the dead body."

"I must have slept," said Silas. Then, after a pause, he added, "Or I must have had another visitation like that which you have all seen me under, so that the thief must have come and gone while I was not in the body, but out of the body. But, I say again, search me and my dwelling, for I have been nowhere else."

The search was made, and it ended — in William Dane's finding the well-known bag, empty, tucked behind the chest of drawers in Silas's chamber! On this William exhorted his friend to confess, and not to hide his sin any longer. Silas turned a look of keen reproach on him, and said, "William, for nine years that we have gone in and out together, have you ever known me tell a lie? But God will clear me."

"Brother," said William, "how do I know what you may have done in the secret chambers of your heart, to give Satan an advantage over you?"

Silas was still looking at his friend. Suddenly a deep flush came over his face, and he was about to speak impetuously, when he seemed checked again by some inward shock that sent the flush back and made him tremble. But at last he spoke feebly, looking at William.

"I remember now — the knife was n't in my pocket."

William said, "I know nothing of what you mean." The other persons present, however, began to inquire where Silas meant to say that the knife was, but he would give no further explanation; he only said, "I am sore stricken; I can say nothing. God will clear me."

On their return to the vestry there was further deliberation. Any resort to legal measures for ascertaining the culprit was contrary to the principles of the church in Lantern Yard, according to which prosecution was forbidden to Christians, even had the case held less scandal to the community. But the members were bound to take other measures for finding out the truth, and they resolved on praying and drawing lots. This resolution can be a ground of surprise only to those who are unacquainted with that obscure religious life which has gone on in the alleys of our towns. Silas knelt with his brethren, relying on his own innocence being certified by immediate divine interference, but feeling that there was sorrow and mourning behind for him even then — that his trust in man had been cruelly bruised. *The lots declared that Silas Marner was guilty.* He was solemnly suspended from church

membership, and called upon to render up the stolen money: only on confession, as the sign of repentance, could he be received once more within the folds of the church. Marner listened in silence. At last, when every one rose to depart, he went towards William Dane, and said. in a voice shaken by agitation, —

"The last time I remember using my knife was when I took it out to cut a strap for you. I don't remember putting it in my pocket again. *You* stole the money, and you have woven the plot to lay the sin at my door. But you may prosper, for all that; there is no just God that governs the earth righteously, but a God of lies, that bears witness against the innocent."

There was a general shudder at this blasphemy.

William said meekly, "I leave our brethren to judge whether this is the voice of Satan or not. I can do nothing but pray for you, Silas."

Poor Marner went out with that despair in his soul, that shaken trust in God and man, which is little short of madness to a loving nature. In the bitterness of his wounded spirit, he said to himself, "*She* will cast me off too." And he reflected that, if she did not believe the testimony against him, her whole faith must be upset, as his was. To people accustomed to reason about the forms in which their religious feeling has incorporated itself, it is difficult to enter into that simple, untaught state of mind in which the form and the feeling have never been severed by an act of reflection. We are apt to think it inevitable that a man in Marner's position should have begun to question the validity of an appeal to the divine judgment by drawing lots; but to him this would have been an effort of independent thought such as he had never known; and he must have made the effort at a moment when all

his energies were turned into the anguish of disappointed faith. If there is an angel who records the sorrows of men as well as their sins, he knows how many and deep are the sorrows that spring from false ideas for which no man is culpable.

Marner went home, and for a whole day sat alone stunned by despair, without any impulse to go to Sarah and attempt to win her belief in his innocence. The second day he took refuge from benumbing unbelief by getting into his loom and working away as usual; and before many hours were past, the minister and one of the deacons came to him with the message from Sarah, that she held her engagement to him at an end. Silas received the message mutely, and then turned away from the messengers to work at his loom again. In little more than a month from that time, Sarah was married to William Dane; and not long afterwards it was known to the brethren in Lantern Yard that Silas Marner had departed from the town.

CHAPTER II.

Even people whose lives have been made various by learning sometimes find it hard to keep a fast hold on their habitual views of life, on their faith in the Invisible — nay, on the sense that their past joys and sorrows are a real experience, when they are suddenly transported to a new land, where the beings around them know nothing of their history, and share none of their ideas — where their mother earth shows another lap, and human life has other forms than those on which their souls have been nourished. Minds that have been unhinged from their old faith and love have

perhaps sought this Lethean influence of exile, in which the past becomes dreamy because its symbols have all vanished, and the present, too, is dreamy because it is linked with no memories. But even *their* experience may hardly enable them thoroughly to imagine what was the effect on a simple weaver like Silas Marner when he left his own country and people and came to settle in Raveloe. Nothing could be more unlike his native town, set within sight of the widespread hillsides, than this low, wooded region, where he felt hidden even from the heavens by the screening trees and hedgerows. There was nothing here, when he rose in the deep morning quiet and looked out on the dewy brambles and rank tufted grass, that seemed to have any relation with that life centring in Lantern Yard, which had once been to him the altar-place of high dispensations. The whitewashed walls; the little pews where well-known figures entered with a subdued rustling, and where first one well-known voice and then another, pitched in a peculiar key of petition, uttered phrases at once occult and familiar, like the amulet worn on the heart; the pulpit where the minister delivered unquestioned doctrine, and swayed to and fro, and handled the book in a long-accustomed manner; the very pauses between the couplets of the hymn, as it was given out, and the recurrent swell of voices in song: these things had been the channel of divine influences to Marner — they were the fostering home of his religious emotions — they were Christianity and God's kingdom upon earth. A weaver who finds hard words in his hymn-book knows nothing of abstractions; as the little child knows nothing of parental love, but only knows one face and one lap towards which it stretches its arms for refuge and nurture.

And what could be more unlike that Lantern Yard world than the world in Raveloe? — orchards looking lazy with neglected plenty; the large church in the wide churchyard, which men gazed at lounging at their own doors in service-time; the purple-faced farmers jogging along the lanes or turning in at the Rainbow; homesteads, where men supped heavily and slept in the light of the evening hearth, and where women seemed to be laying up a stock of linen for the life to come. There were no lips in Raveloe from which a word could fall that would stir Silas Marner's benumbed faith to a sense of pain. In the early ages of the world, we know, it was believed that each territory was inhabited and ruled by its own divinities, so that a man could cross the bordering heights and be out of the reach of his native gods, whose presence was confined to the streams and the groves and the hills among which he had lived from his birth. And poor Silas was vaguely conscious of something not unlike the feeling of primitive men, when they fled thus, in fear or in sullenness, from the face of an unpropitious deity. It seemed to him that the Power he had vainly trusted in among the streets and at the prayer-meetings was very far away from this land in which he had taken refuge, where men lived in careless abundance, knowing and needing nothing of that trust which, for him, had been turned to bitterness. The little light he possessed spread its beams so narrowly, that frustrated belief was a curtain broad enough to create for him the blackness of night.

His first movement after the shock had been to work in his loom; and he went on with this unremittingly, never asking himself why, now he was come to Raveloe, he worked far on into the night to finish the

tale of Mrs. Osgood's table-linen sooner than she expected — without contemplating beforehand the money she would put into his hand for the work. He seemed to weave, like the spider, from pure impulse, without reflection. Every man's work, pursued steadily, tends in this way to become an end in itself, and so to bridge over the loveless chasms of his life. Silas's hand satisfied itself with throwing the shuttle, and his eye with seeing the little squares in the cloth complete themselves under his effort. Then there were the calls of hunger; and Silas, in his solitude, had to provide his own breakfast, dinner, and supper, to fetch his own water from the well, and put his own kettle on the fire; and all these immediate promptings helped, along with the weaving, to reduce his life to the unquestioning activity of a spinning insect. He hated the thought of the past; there was nothing that called out his love and fellowship toward the strangers he had come amongst; and the future was all dark, for there was no Unseen Love that cared for him. Thought was arrested by utter bewilderment now its old narrow pathway was closed, and affection seemed to have died under the bruise that had fallen on its keenest nerves.

But at last Mrs. Osgood's table-linen was finished, and Silas was paid in gold. His earnings in his native town, where he worked for a wholesale dealer, had been after a lower rate; he had been paid weekly, and of his weekly earnings a large proportion had gone to objects of piety and charity. Now, for the first time in his life, he had five bright guineas put into his hand; no man expected a share of them, and he loved no man that he should offer him a share. But what were the guineas to him who saw no vista beyond

countless days of weaving? It was needless for him to ask that, for it was pleasant to him to feel them in his palm, and look at their bright faces, which were all his own: it was another element of life, like the weaving and the satisfaction of hunger, subsisting quite aloof from the life of belief and love from which he had been cut off. The weaver's hand had known the touch of hard-won money even before the palm had grown to its full breadth; for twenty years, mysterious money had stood to him as the symbol of earthly good, and the immediate object of toil. He had seemed to love it little in the years when every penny had its purpose for him: for he loved the *purpose* then. But now, when all purpose was gone, that habit of looking towards the money and grasping it with a sense of fulfilled effort made a loam that was deep enough for the seeds of desire; and as Silas walked homeward across the fields in the twilight, he drew out the money, and thought it was brighter in the gathering gloom.

About this time an incident happened which seemed to open a possibility of some fellowship with his neighbors. One day, taking a pair of shoes to be mended, he saw the cobbler's wife seated by the fire, suffering from the terrible symptoms of heart-disease and dropsy, which he had witnessed as the precursors of his mother's death. He felt a rush of pity at the mingled sight and remembrance, and, recalling the relief his mother had found from a simple preparation of foxglove, he promised Sally Oates to bring her something that would ease her, since the doctor did her no good. In this office of charity, Silas felt, for the first time since he had come to Raveloe, a sense of unity between his past and present life, which might have been the

beginning of his rescue from the insect-like existence into which his nature had shrunk. But Sally Oates's disease had raised her into a personage of much interest and importance among the neighbors, and the fact of her having found relief from drinking Silas Marner's "stuff" became a matter of general discourse. When Doctor Kimble gave physic, it was natural that it should have an effect; but when a weaver, who came from nobody knew where, worked wonders with a bottle of brown waters, the occult character of the process was evident. Such a sort of thing had not been known since the Wise Woman at Tarley died; and she had charms as well as "stuff:" everybody went to her when their children had fits. Silas Marner must be a person of the same sort, for how did he know what would bring back Sally Oates's breath, if he did n't know a fine sight more than that? The Wise Woman had words that she muttered to herself, so that you could n't hear what they were, and if she tied a bit of red thread round the child's toe the while, it would keep off the water in the head. There were women in Raveloe, at that present time, who had worn one of the Wise Woman's little bags round their necks, and, in consequence, had never had an idiot child, as Ann Coulter had. Silas Marner could very likely do as much, and more; and now it was all clear how he should have come from unknown parts, and be so "comical-looking." But Sally Oates must mind and not tell the doctor, for he would be sure to set his face against Marner: he was always angry about the Wise Woman, and used to threaten those who went to her that they should have none of his help any more.

Silas now found himself and his cottage suddenly

beset by mothers who wanted him to charm away the whooping-cough, or bring back the milk, and by men who wanted stuff against the rheumatics or the knots in the hands; and, to secure themselves against a refusal, the applicants brought silver in their palms Silas might have driven a profitable trade in charms as well as in his small list of drugs; but money on this condition was no temptation to him: he had never known an impulse towards falsity, and he drove one after another away with growing irritation, for the news of him as a wise man had spread even to Tarley, and it was long before people ceased to take long walks for the sake of asking his aid. But the hope in his wisdom was at length changed into dread, for no one believed him when he said he knew no charms and could work no cures, and every man and woman who had an accident or a new attack after applying to him, set the misfortune down to Master Marner's ill-will and irritated glances. Thus it came to pass that his movement of pity towards Sally Oates, which had given him a transient sense of brotherhood, heightened the repulsion between him and his neighbors, and made his isolation more complete.

Gradually the guineas, the crowns, and the half-crowns grew to a heap, and Marner drew less and less for his own wants, trying to solve the problem of keeping himself strong enough to work sixteen hours a day on as small an outlay as possible. Have not men, shut up in solitary imprisonment, found an interest in marking the moments by straight strokes of a certain length on the wall, until the growth of the sum of straight strokes, arranged in triangles, has become a mastering purpose? Do we not wile away moments of inanity or fatigued waiting by repeating

some trivial movement or sound, until the repetition has bred a want, which is incipient habit? That will help us to understand how the love of accumulating money grows an absorbing passion in men whose imaginations, even in the very beginning of their hoard, showed them no purpose beyond it. Marner wanted the heaps of ten to grow into a square, and then into a larger square; and every added guinea, while it was itself a satisfaction, bred a new desire. In this strange world, made a hopeless riddle to him, he might, if he had had a less intense nature, have sat weaving, weaving — looking towards the end of his pattern, or towards the end of his web, till he forgot the riddle, and everything else but his immediate sensations; but the money had come to mark off his weaving into periods, and the money not only grew, but it remained with him. He began to think it was conscious of him, as his loom was, and he would on no account have exchanged those coins, which had become his familiars, for other coins with unknown faces. He handled them, he counted them, till their form and color were like the satisfaction of a thirst to him; but it was only in the night, when his work was done, that he drew them out to enjoy their companionship. He had taken up some bricks in his floor underneath his loom, and here he had made a hole in which he set the iron pot that contained his guineas and silver coins, covering the bricks with sand whenever he replaced them. Not that the idea of being robbed presented itself often or strongly to his mind: hoarding was common in country districts in those days; there were old laborers in the parish of Raveloe who were known to have their savings by them, probably inside their flock-beds; but their rustic neighbors, though not all of them as

honest as their ancestors in the days of King Alfred, had not imaginations bold enough to lay a plan of burglary. How could they have spent the money in their own village without betraying themselves? They would be obliged to "run away" — a course as dark and dubious as a balloon journey.

So, year after year, Silas Marner had lived in this solitude, his guineas rising in the iron pot, and his life narrowing and hardening itself more and more into a mere pulsation of desire and satisfaction that had no relation to any other being. His life had reduced itself to the functions of weaving and hoarding, without any contemplation of an end towards which the functions tended. The same sort of process has perhaps been undergone by wiser men, when they have been cut off from faith and love — only, instead of a loom and a heap of guineas, they have had some erudite research, some ingenious project, or some well-knit theory. Strangely Marner's face and figure shrank and bent themselves into a constant mechanical relation to the objects of his life, so that he produced the same sort of impression as a handle or a crooked tube, which has no meaning standing apart. The prominent eyes that used to look trusting and dreamy now looked as if they had been made to see only one kind of thing that was very small, like tiny grain, for which they hunted everywhere: and he was so withered and yellow that, though he was not yet forty, the children always called him "Old Master Marner."

Yet even in this stage of withering a little incident happened which showed that the sap of affection was not all gone. It was one of his daily tasks to fetch his water from a well a couple of fields off, and for this purpose, ever since he came to Raveloe, he had

had a brown earthenware pot, which he held as his most precious utensil, among the very few conveniences he had granted himself. It had been his companion for twelve years, always standing on the same spot, always lending its handle to him in the early morning, so that its form had an expression for him of willing helpfulness, and the impress of its handle on his palm gave a satisfaction mingled with that of having the fresh clear water. One day as he was returning from the well he stumbled against the step of the stile, and his brown pot, falling with force against the stones that overarched the ditch below him, was broken in three pieces. Silas picked up the pieces and carried them home with grief in his heart. The brown pot could never be of use to him any more, but he stuck the bits together and propped the ruin in its old place for a memorial.

This is the history of Silas Marner until the fifteenth year after he came to Raveloe. The livelong day he sat in his loom, his ear filled with its monotony, his eyes bent close down on the slow growth of sameness in the brownish web, his muscles moving with such even repetition that their pause seemed almost as much a constraint as the holding of his breath. But at night came his revelry: at night he closed his shutters, and made fast his doors, and drew forth his gold. Long ago the heap of coins had become too large for the iron pot to hold them, and he had made for them two thick leather bags, which wasted no room in their resting-place, but lent themselves flexibly to every corner. How the guineas shone as they came pouring out of the dark leather mouths! The silver bore no large proportion in amount to the gold, because the long pieces of linen which formed his chief

work were always partly paid for in gold, and out of the silver he supplied his own bodily wants, choosing always the shillings and sixpences to spend in this way. He loved the guineas best, but he would not change the silver — the crowns and half-crowns that were his own earnings, begotten by his labor; he loved them all. He spread them out in heaps and bathed his hands in them; then he counted them and set them up in regular piles, and felt their rounded outline between his thumb and fingers, and thought fondly of the guineas that were only half earned by the work in his loom, as if they had been unborn children — thought of the guineas that were coming slowly through the coming years, through all his life, which spread far away before him, the end quite hidden by countless days of weaving. No wonder his thoughts were still with his loom and his money when he made his journeys through the fields and the lanes to fetch and carry home his work, so that his steps never wandered to the hedge-banks and the lane-side in search of the once familiar herbs: these, too, belonged to the past, from which his life had shrunk away, like a rivulet that has sunk far down from the grassy fringe of its old breadth into a little shivering thread, that cuts a groove for itself in the barren sand.

But about the Christmas of that fifteenth year a second great change came over Marner's life, and his history became blent in a singular manner with the life of his neighbors.

CHAPTER III.

THE greatest man in Raveloe was Squire Cass, who lived in the large red house, with the handsome flight of stone steps in front and the high stables behind it, nearly opposite the church. He was only one among several landed parishioners, but he alone was honored with the title of Squire; for though Mr. Osgood's family was also understood to be of timeless origin — the Raveloe imagination having never ventured back to that fearful blank when there were no Osgoods — still he merely owned the farm he occupied; whereas Squire Cass had a tenant or two, who complained of the game to him quite as if he had been a lord.

It was still that glorious war-time which was felt to be a peculiar favor of Providence towards the landed interest, and the fall of prices had not yet come to carry the race of small squires and yeomen down that road to ruin for which extravagant habits and bad husbandry were plentifully anointing their wheels. I am speaking now in relation to Raveloe and the parishes that resembled it; for our old-fashioned country life had many different aspects, as all life must have when it is spread over a various surface, and breathed on variously by multitudinous currents, from the winds of heaven to the thoughts of men, which are forever moving and crossing each other, with incalculable results. Raveloe lay low among the bushy trees and the rutted lanes, aloof from the currents of industrial energy and Puritan earnestness: the rich ate and drank freely, accepting gout and apoplexy as things that ran mysteriously in respectable families, and the poor thought that the rich were entirely in the right of

it to lead a jolly life; besides, their feasting caused a multiplication of orts, which were the heirlooms of the poor. Betty Jay scented the boiling of Squire Cass's hams, but her longing was arrested by the unctuous liquor in which they were boiled; and when the seasons brought round the great merrymakings, they were regarded on all hands as a fine thing for the poor. For the Raveloe feasts were like the rounds of beef and the barrels of ale — they were on a large scale, and lasted a good while, especially in the winter-time. After ladies had packed up their best gowns and top-knots in bandboxes, and had incurred the risk of fording streams on pillions with the precious burden in rainy or snowy weather, when there was no knowing how high the water would rise, it was not to be supposed that they looked forward to a brief pleasure. On this ground it was always contrived in the dark seasons, when there was little work to be done, and the hours were long, that several neighbors should keep open house in succession. So soon as Squire Cass's standing dishes diminished in plenty and freshness, his guests had nothing to do but to walk a little higher up the village to Mr. Osgood's, at the Orchards, and they found hams and chines uncut, pork-pies with the scent of the fire in them, spun butter in all its freshness — everything, in fact, that appetites at leisure could desire, in perhaps greater perfection, though not in greater abundance, than at Squire Cass's.

For the Squire's wife had died long ago, and the Red House was without that presence of the wife and mother which is the fountain of wholesome love and fear in parlor and kitchen; and this helped to account not only for there being more profusion than finished excellence in the holiday provisions, but also for the

frequency with which the proud Squire condescended to preside in the parlor of the Rainbow rather than under the shadow of his own dark wainscot; perhaps, also, for the fact that his sons had turned out rather ill. Raveloe was not a place where moral censure was severe, but it was thought a weakness in the Squire that he had kept all his sons at home in idleness; and though some license was to be allowed to young men whose fathers could afford it, people shook their heads at the courses of the second son, Dunstan, commonly called Dunsey Cass, whose taste for swopping and betting might turn out to be a sowing of something worse than wild oats. To be sure, the neighbors said, it was no matter what became of Dunsey, — a spiteful, jeering fellow, who seemed to enjoy his drink the more when other people went dry, — always provided that his doings did not bring trouble on a family like Squire Cass's, with a monument in the church, and tankards older than King George. But it would be a thousand pities if Mr. Godfrey, the eldest, a fine, open-faced, good-natured young man, who was to come into the land some day, should take to going along the same road with his brother, as he had seemed to do of late. If he went on in that way, he would lose Miss Nancy Lammeter; for it was well known that she had looked very shyly on him ever since last Whitsuntide twelvemonth, when there was so much talk about his being away from home days and days together. There was something wrong, more than common — that was quite clear; for Mr. Godfrey did n't look half so fresh-colored and open as he used to do. At one time everybody was saying, What a handsome couple he and Miss Nancy Lammeter would make! and if she could come to be mistress at the Red House there would be

a fine change, for the Lammeters had been brought up in that way, that they never suffered a pinch of salt to be wasted, and yet everybody in their household had of the best, according to his place. Such a daughter-in-law would be a saving to the old Squire, if she never brought a penny to her fortune; for it was to be feared that, notwithstanding his incomings, there were more holes in his pocket than the one where he put his own hand in. But if Mr. Godfrey did n't turn over a new leaf, he might say "Good-by" to Miss Nancy Lammeter.

It was the once hopeful Godfrey who was standing, with his hands in his side-pockets and his back to the fire, in the dark wainscoted parlor, one late November afternoon, in that fifteenth year of Silas Marner's life at Raveloe. The fading gray light fell dimly on the walls decorated with guns, whips, and foxes' brushes, on coats and hats flung on the chairs, on tankards sending forth a scent of flat ale, and on a half-choked fire, with pipes propped up in the chimney-corners: signs of a domestic life destitute of any hallowing charm, with which the look of gloomy vexation on Godfrey's blond face was in sad accordance. He seemed to be waiting and listening for some one's approach, and presently the sound of a heavy step, with an accompanying whistle, was heard across the large empty entrance-hall.

The door opened, and a thick-set, heavy-looking young man entered, with the flushed face and the gratuitously elated bearing which mark the first stage of intoxication. It was Dunsey, and at the sight of him Godfrey's face parted with some of its gloom to take on the more active expression of hatred. The handsome brown spaniel that lay on the hearth retreated under the chair in the chimney-corner.

"Well, Master Godfrey, what do you want with me?" said Dunsey, in a mocking tone. "You 're my elders and betters, you know; I was obliged to come when you sent for me."

"Why, this is what I want — and just shake yourself sober and listen, will you?" said Godfrey savagely. He had himself been drinking more than was good for him, trying to turn his gloom into uncalculating anger. "I want to tell you, I must hand over that rent of Fowler's to the Squire, or else tell him I gave it you; for he 's threatening to distrain for it, and it 'll all be out soon, whether I tell him or not. He said, just now, before he went out, he should send word to Cox to distrain, if Fowler did n't come and pay up his arrears this week. The Squire 's short o' cash, and in no humor to stand any nonsense; and you know what he threatened, if ever he found you making away with his money again. So, see and get the money, and pretty quickly, will you?"

"Oh!" said Dunsey sneeringly, coming nearer to his brother and looking in his face. "Suppose, now, you get the money yourself, and save me the trouble, eh? Since you was so kind as to hand it over to me, you 'll not refuse me the kindness to pay it back for me: it was your brotherly love made you do it, you know."

Godfrey bit his lips and clenched his fist. "Don't come near me with that look, else I 'll knock you down."

"Oh no, you won't," said Dunsey, turning away on his heel, however. "Because I 'm such a good-natured brother, you know. I might get you turned out of house and home, and cut off with a shilling any day. I might tell the Squire how his handsome son was

married to that nice young woman, Molly Farren, and was very unhappy because he could n't live with his drunken wife, and I should slip into your place as comfortable as could be. But, you see, I don't do it — I 'm so easy and good-natured. You 'll take any trouble for me. You 'll get the hundred pounds for me — I know you will."

"How can I get the money?" said Godfrey, quivering. "I have n't a shilling to bless myself with. And it 's a lie that you 'd slip into my place: you 'd get yourself turned out too, that 's all. For if you begin telling tales, I 'll follow. Bob 's my father's favorite — you know that very well. He 'd only think himself well rid of you."

"Never mind," said Dunsey, nodding his head sideways as he looked out of the window. "It 'ud be very pleasant to me to go in your company — you 're such a handsome brother, and we 've always been so fond of quarrelling with one another I should n't know what to do without you. But you 'd like better for us both to stay at home together; I know you would. So you 'll manage to get that little sum o' money, and I 'll bid you good-by, though I 'm sorry to part."

Dunstan was moving off, but Godfrey rushed after him and seized him by the arm, saying, with an oath, —

"I tell you, I have no money: I can get no money."

"Borrow of old Kimble."

"I tell you, he won't lend me any more, and I shan't ask him."

"Well then, sell Wildfire."

"Yes, that 's easy talking. I must have the money directly."

"Well, you 've only got to ride him to the hunt to

morrow. There 'll be Bryce and Keating there, for sure. You 'll get more bids than one."

"I dare say, and get back home at eight o'clock, splashed up to the chin. I 'm going to Mrs. Osgood's birthday dance."

"Oho!" said Dunsey, turning his head on one side, and trying to speak in a small mincing treble. "And there 's sweet Miss Nancy coming; and we shall dance with her, and promise never to be naughty again, and be taken into favor, and" —

"Hold your tongue about Miss Nancy, you fool," said Godfrey, turning red, "else I 'll throttle you."

"What for?" said Dunsey, still in an artificial tone, but taking a whip from the table and beating the butt-end of it on his palm. "You 've a very good chance. I 'd advise you to creep up her sleeve again: it 'ud be saving time if Molly should happen to take a drop too much laudanum some day, and make a widower of you. Miss Nancy would n't mind being a second, if she did n't know it. And you 've got a good-natured brother, who 'll keep your secret well, because you 'll be so very obliging to him."

"I 'll tell you what it is," said Godfrey, quivering, and pale again, "my patience is pretty near at an end. If you 'd a little more sharpness in you, you might know that you may urge a man a bit too far, and make one leap as easy as another. I don't know but what it is so now: I may as well tell the Squire everything myself — I should get you off my back, if I got nothing else. And, after all, he 'll know some time. She 's been threatening to come herself and tell him. So, don't flatter yourself that your secrecy 's worth any price you choose to ask. You drain me of money till I have got nothing to pacify *her* with. and

she 'll do as she threatens some day. It 's all one. I 'll tell my father everything myself, and you may go to the devil."

Dunsey perceived that he had overshot his mark, and that there was a point at which even the hesitating Godfrey might be driven into decision. But he said, with an air of unconcern, —

"As you please; but I 'll have a draught of ale first." And ringing the bell, he threw himself across two chairs, and began to rap the window-seat with the handle of his whip.

Godfrey stood, still with his back to the fire, uneasily moving his fingers among the contents of his side-pockets, and looking at the floor. That big muscular frame of his held plenty of animal courage, but helped him to no decision when the dangers to be braved were such as could neither be knocked down nor throttled. His natural irresolution and moral cowardice were exaggerated by a position in which dreaded consequences seemed to press equally on all sides, and his irritation had no sooner provoked him to defy Dunstan and anticipate all possible betrayals, than the miseries he must bring on himself by such a step seemed more unendurable to him than the present evil. The results of confession were not contingent, they were certain; whereas betrayal was not certain. From the near vision of that certainty he fell back on suspense and vacillation with a sense of repose. The disinherited son of a small squire, equally disinclined to dig and to beg, was almost as helpless as an uprooted tree, which, by the favor of earth and sky, has grown to a handsome bulk on the spot where it first shot upward. Perhaps it would have been possible to think of digging with some cheerfulness if

Nancy Lammeter were to be won on those terms; but, since he must irrevocably lose *her* as well as the inheritance, and must break every tie but the one that degraded him and left him without motive for trying to recover his better self, he could imagine no future for himself on the other side of confession but that of "'listing for a soldier," — the most desperate step short of suicide, in the eyes of respectable families. No! he would rather trust to casualties than to his own resolve — rather go on sitting at the feast and sipping the wine he loved, though with the sword hanging over him and terror in his heart, than rush away into the cold darkness where there was no pleasure left. The utmost concession to Dunstan about the horse began to seem easy, compared with the fulfilment of his own threat. But his pride would not let him recommence the conversation otherwise than by continuing the quarrel. Dunstan was waiting for this, and took his ale in shorter draughts than usual.

"It 's just like you," Godfrey burst out, in a bitter tone, "to talk about my selling Wildfire in that cool way — the last thing I 've got to call my own, and the best bit of horse-flesh I ever had in my life. And if you 'd got a spark of pride in you, you 'd be ashamed to see the stables emptied, and everybody sneering about it. But it 's my belief you 'd sell yourself, if it was only for the pleasure of making somebody feel he 'd got a bad bargain."

"Ay, ay," said Dunstan, very placably, "you do me justice, I see. You know I 'm a jewel for 'ticing people into bargains. For which reason I advise you to let *me* sell Wildfire. I 'd ride him to the hunt to-morrow for you, with pleasure. I should n't look so handsome as you in the saddle, but it 's the horse they 'll bid for, and not the rider."

"Yes, I dare say — trust my horse to you!"

"As you please," said Dunstan, rapping the window-seat again with an air of great unconcern. "It 's *you* have got to pay Fowler's money; it 's none of my business. You received the money from him when you went to Bramcote, and *you* told the Squire it was n't paid. I 'd nothing to do with that; you chose to be so obliging as to give it me, that was all. If you don't want to pay the money, let it alone; it 's all one to me. But I was willing to accommodate you by undertaking to sell the horse, seeing it 's not convenient to you to go so far to-morrow."

Godfrey was silent for some moments. He would have liked to spring on Dunstan, wrench the whip from his hand, and flog him to within an inch of his life; and no bodily fear could have deterred him; but he was mastered by another sort of fear, which was fed by feelings stronger even than his resentment. When he spoke again, it was in a half-conciliatory tone.

"Well, you mean no nonsense about the horse, eh? You 'll sell him all fair, and hand over the money? If you don't, you know, everything 'ull go to smash, for I 've got nothing else to trust to. And you 'll have less pleasure in pulling the house over my head, when your own skull 's to be broken too."

"Ay, ay," said Dunstan, rising; "all right. I thought you 'd come round. I 'm the fellow to bring old Bryce up to the scratch. I 'll get you a hundred and twenty for him, if I get you a penny."

"But it 'll perhaps rain cats and dogs to-morrow, as it did yesterday, and then you can't go," said Godfrey, hardly knowing whether he wished for that obstacle or not.

"Not *it*," said Dunstan. "I 'm always lucky in my weather. It might rain if you wanted to go yourself. You never hold trumps, you know — I always do. You 've got the beauty, you see, and I 've got the luck, so you must keep me by you for your crooked sixpence; you 'll *ne*-ver get along without me."

"Confound you, hold your tongue!" said Godfrey impetuously. "And take care to keep sober to-morrow, else you 'll get pitched on your head coming home, and Wildfire might be the worse for it."

"Make your tender heart easy," said Dunstan, opening the door. "You never knew me see double when I 'd got a bargain to make; it 'ud spoil the fun. Besides whenever I fall, I 'm warranted to fall on my legs."

With that, Dunstan slammed the door behind him, and left Godfrey to that bitter rumination on his personal circumstances which was now unbroken from day to day save by the excitement of sporting, drinking, card-playing, or the rarer and less oblivious pleasure of seeing Miss Nancy Lammeter. The subtle and varied pains springing from the higher sensibility that accompanies higher culture, are perhaps less pitiable than that dreary absence of impersonal enjoyment and consolation which leaves ruder minds to the perpetual urgent companionship of their own griefs and discontents. The lives of those rural forefathers whom we are apt to think very prosaic figures — men whose only work was to ride round their land, getting heavier and heavier in their saddles, and who passed the rest of their days in the half-listless gratification of senses dulled by monotony — had a certain pathos in them nevertheless. Calamities came to *them* too, and their early errors carried hard consequences. perhaps the

love of some sweet maiden, the image of purity, order, and calm, had opened their eyes to the vision of a life in which the days would not seem too long, even without rioting, but the maiden was lost, and the vision passed away, and then what was left to them, especially when they had become too heavy for the hunt, or for carrying a gun over the furrows, but to drink and get merry, or to drink and get angry, so that they might be independent of variety, and say over again with eager emphasis the things they had said already any time that twelvemonth? Assuredly, among these flushed and dull-eyed men there were some whom — thanks to their native human kindness — even riot could never drive into brutality; men who, when their cheeks were fresh, had felt the keen point of sorrow or remorse, had been pierced by the reeds they leaned on, or had lightly put their limbs in fetters from which no struggle could loose them; and under these sad circumstances, common to us all, their thoughts could find no resting-place outside the ever trodden round of their own petty history.

That, at least, was the condition of Godfrey Cass in this six and twentieth year of his life. A movement of compunction, helped by those small indefinable influences which every personal relation exerts on a pliant nature, had urged him into a secret marriage, which was a blight on his life. It was an ugly story of low passion, delusion, and waking from delusion, which needs not to be dragged from the privacy of Godfrey's bitter memory. He had long known that the delusion was partly due to a trap laid for him by Dunstan, who saw in his brother's degrading marriage the means of gratifying at once his jealous hate and his cupidity. And if Godfrey could have felt himself

simply a victim, the iron bit that destiny had put into his mouth would have chafed him less intolerably. If the curses he muttered half aloud when he was alone had had no other object than Dunstan's diabolical cunning, he might have shrunk less from the consequences of avowal. But he had something else to curse — his own vicious folly, which now seemed as mad and unaccountable to him as almost all our follies and vices do when their promptings have long passed away. For four years he had thought of Nancy Lammeter, and wooed her with tacit patient worship, as the woman who made him think of the future with joy: she would be his wife, and would make home lovely to him, as his father's home had never been; and it would be easy, when she was always near, to shake off those foolish habits that were no pleasures, but only a feverish way of annulling vacancy. Godfrey's was an essentially domestic nature, bred up in a home where the hearth had no smiles, and where the daily habits were not chastised by the presence of household order. His easy disposition made him fall in unresistingly with the family courses, but the need of some tender permanent affection, the longing for some influence that would make the good he preferred easy to pursue, caused the neatness, purity, and liberal orderliness of the Lammeter household, sunned by the smile of Nancy, to seem like those fresh bright hours of the morning, when temptations go to sleep, and leave the ear open to the voice of the good angel, inviting to industry, sobriety, and peace. And yet the hope of this paradise had not been enough to save him from a course which shut him out of it forever. Instead of keeping fast hold of the strong silken rope by which Nancy would have drawn him safe to the green banks,

where it was easy to step firmly, he had let himself be dragged back into mud and slime, in which it was useless to struggle. He had made ties for himself which robbed him of all wholesome motive, and were a constant exasperation.

Still, there was one position worse than the present: it was the position he would be in when the ugly secret was disclosed; and the desire that continually triumphed over every other was that of warding off the evil day, when he would have to bear the consequences of his father's violent resentment for the wound inflicted on his family pride — would have, perhaps, to turn his back on that hereditary ease and dignity which, after all, was a sort of reason for living, and would carry with him the certainty that he was banished forever from the sight and esteem of Nancy Lammeter. The longer the interval, the more chance there was of deliverance from some, at least, of the hateful consequences to which he had sold himself; the more opportunities remained for him to snatch the strange gratification of seeing Nancy, and gathering some faint indications of her lingering regard. Towards this gratification he was impelled, fitfully, every now and then, after having passed weeks in which he had avoided her as the far-off, bright-winged prize, that only made him spring forward, and find his chain all the more galling. One of those fits of yearning was on him now, and it would have been strong enough to have persuaded him to trust Wildfire to Dunstan rather than disappoint the yearning, even if he had not had another reason for his disinclination towards the morrow's hunt. That other reason was the fact that the morning's meet was near Batherley, the market-town where the unhappy woman lived, whose image became more

odious to him every day; and to his thought the whole vicinage was haunted by her. The yoke a man creates for himself by wrong-doing will breed hate in the kindliest nature; and the good-humored, affectionate hearted Godfrey Cass was fast becoming a bitter man visited by cruel wishes, that seemed to enter, and depart, and enter again, like demons who had found in him a ready-garnished home.

What was he to do this evening to pass the time? He might as well go to the Rainbow, and hear the talk about the cock-fighting: everybody was there, and what else was there to be done? Though, for his own part, he did not care a button for cock-fighting. Snuff, the brown spaniel, who had placed herself in front of him, and had been watching him for some time, now jumped up in impatience for the expected caress. But Godfrey thrust her away without looking at her, and left the room, followed humbly by the unresenting Snuff — perhaps because she saw no other career open to her.

CHAPTER IV

Dunstan Cass, setting off in the raw morning, at the judiciously quiet pace of a man who is obliged to ride to cover on his hunter, had to take his way along the lane which, at its farther extremity, passed by the piece of uninclosed ground called the Stone-pit, where stood the cottage, once a stone-cutter's shed, now for fifteen years inhabited by Silas Marner. The spot looked very dreary at this season, with the moist trodden clay about it, and the red, muddy water high up in the deserted quarry. That was Dunstan's first thought as he approached it: the second was, that the

ld fool of a weaver, whose loom he heard rattling already, had a great deal of money hidden somewhere. How was it that he, Dunstan Cass, who had often heard talk of Marner's miserliness, had never thought of suggesting to Godfrey that he should frighten or persuade the old fellow into lending the money on the excellent security of the young Squire's prospects? The resource occurred to him now as so easy and agreeable, especially as Marner's hoard was likely to be large enough to leave Godfrey a handsome surplus beyond his immediate needs, and enable him to accommodate his faithful brother, that he had almost turned the horse's head towards home again. Godfrey would be ready enough to accept the suggestion: he would snatch eagerly at a plan that might save him from parting with Wildfire. But when Dunstan's meditation reached this point, the inclination to go on grew strong and prevailed. He did n't want to give Godfrey that pleasure: he preferred that Master Godfrey should be vexed. Moreover, Dunstan enjoyed the self-important consciousness of having a horse to sell, and the opportunity of driving a bargain, swaggering, and, possibly, taking somebody in. He might have all the satisfaction attendant on selling his brother's horse, and not the less have the further satisfaction of setting Godfrey to borrow Marner's money. So he rode on to cover.

Bryce and Keating were there, as Dunstan was quite sure they would be — he was such a lucky fellow.

"Heyday," said Bryce, who had long had his eye on Wildfire, "you 're on your brother's horse to-day: how 's that?"

"Oh, I 've swopped with him," said Dunstan, whose

delight in lying, grandly independent of utility, was not to be diminished by the likelihood that his hearer would not believe him. "Wildfire 's mine now."

"What! has he swopped with you for that big-boned hack of yours?" said Bryce, quite aware that he should get another lie in answer.

"Oh, there was a little account between us," said Dunsey carelessly, "and Wildfire made it even. I accommodated him by taking the horse, though it was against my will, for I 'd got an itch for a mare o' Jortin's — as rare a bit o' blood as ever you threw your leg across. But I shall keep Wildfire, now I 've got him, though I 'd a bid of a hundred and fifty for him the other day, from a man over at Flitton — he 's buying for Lord Cromleck — a fellow with a cast in his eye, and a green waistcoat. But I mean to stick to Wildfire: I shan't get a better at a fence in a hurry. The mare 's got more blood, but she 's a bit too weak in the hind-quarters."

Bryce of course divined that Dunstan wanted to sell the horse, and Dunstan knew that he divined it (horse-dealing is only one of many human transactions carried on in this ingenious manner); and they both considered that the bargain was in its first stage, when Bryce replied ironically, —

"I wonder at that now; I wonder you mean to keep him; for I never heard of a man who did n't want to sell his horse getting a bid of half as much again as the horse was worth. You 'll be lucky if you get a hundred."

Keating rode up now, and the transaction became more complicated. It ended in the purchase of the horse by Bryce for a hundred and twenty, to be paid on the delivery of Wildfire, safe and sound, at the

Batherley stables. It did occur to Dunsey that it might be wise for him to give up the day's hunting, proceed at once to Batherley, and, having waited for Bryce's return, hire a horse to carry him home with the money in his pocket. But the inclination for a run, encouraged by confidence in his luck, and by a draught of brandy from his pocket-pistol at the conclusion of the bargain, was not easy to overcome, especially with a horse under him that would take the fences to the admiration of the field. Dunstan, however, took one fence too many, and got his horse pierced with a hedge-stake. His own ill-favored person, which was quite unmarketable, escaped without injury; but poor Wildfire, unconscious of his price, turned on his flank, and painfully panted his last. It happened that Dunstan, a short time before, having had to get down to arrange his stirrup, had muttered a good many curses at this interruption, which had thrown him in the rear of the hunt near the moment of glory, and under this exasperation had taken the fences more blindly. He would soon have been up with the hounds again, when the fatal accident happened; and hence he was between eager riders in advance, not troubling themselves about what happened behind them, and far-off stragglers, who were as likely as not to pass quite aloof from the line of road in which Wildfire had fallen. Dunstan, whose nature it was to care more for immediate annoyances than for remote consequences, no sooner recovered his legs, and saw that it was all over with Wildfire, than he felt a satisfaction at the absence of witnesses to a position which no swaggering could make enviable. Reinforcing himself, after his shake, with a little brandy and much swearing, he walked as fast as he could to a coppice on his right

hand, through which it occurred to him that he could make his way to Batherley without danger of encountering any member of the hunt. His first intention was to hire a horse there and ride home forthwith, for to walk many miles without a gun in his hand, and along an ordinary road, was as much out of the question to him as to other spirited young men of his kind. He did not much mind about taking the bad news to Godfrey, for he had to offer him at the same time the resource of Marner's money; and if Godfrey kicked, as he always did, at the notion of making a fresh debt, from which he himself got the smallest share of advantage, why, he would n't kick long: Dunstan felt sure he could worry Godfrey into anything. The idea of Marner's money kept growing in vividness, now the want of it had become immediate; the prospect of having to make his appearance with the muddy boots of a pedestrian at Batherley, and to encounter the grinning queries of stablemen, stood unpleasantly in the way of his impatience to be back at Raveloe and carry out his felicitous plan; and a casual visitation of his waistcoat-pocket, as he was ruminating, awakened his memory to the fact that the two or three small coins his fore-finger encountered there were of too pale a color to cover that small debt, without payment of which the stable-keeper had declared he would never do any more business with Dunsey Cass. After all, according to the direction in which the run had brought him, he was not so very much farther from home than he was from Batherley; but Dunsey, not being remarkable for clearness of head, was only led to this conclusion by the gradual perception that there were other reasons for choosing the unprecedented course of walking home. It was now nearly four o'clock, and a mist was gather-

ing: the sooner he got into the road the better. He remembered having crossed the road and seen the finger-post only a little while before Wildfire broke down; so, buttoning his coat, twisting the lash of his hunting-whip compactly round the handle, and rapping the tops of his boots with a self-possessed air, as if to assure himself that he was not at all taken by surprise, he set off with the sense that he was undertaking a remarkable feat of bodily exertion, which somehow, and at some time, he should be able to dress up and magnify to the admiration of a select circle at the Rainbow. When a young gentleman like Dunsey is reduced to so exceptional a mode of locomotion as walking, a whip in his hand is a desirable corrective to a too bewildering dreamy sense of unwontedness in his position; and Dunstan, as he went along through the gathering mist, was always rapping his whip somewhere. It was Godfrey's whip, which he had chosen to take without leave because it had a gold handle; of course no one could see, when Dunstan held it, that the name *Godfrey Cass* was cut in deep letters on that gold handle — they could only see that it was a very handsome whip. Dunsey was not without fear that he might meet some acquaintance in whose eyes he would cut a pitiable figure, for mist is no screen when people get close to each other; but when he at last found himself in the well-known Raveloe lanes without having met a soul, he silently remarked that that was part of his usual good luck. But now the mist, helped by the evening darkness, was more of a screen than he desired, for it hid the ruts into which his feet were liable to slip — hid everything, so that he had to guide his steps by dragging his whip along the low bushes in advance of the hedgerow. He must soon, he

thought, be getting near the opening at the Stone-pits. he should find it out by the break in the hedgerow. He found it out, however, by another circumstance which he had not expected — namely, by certain gleams of light, which he presently guessed to proceed from Silas Marner's cottage. That cottage and the money hidden within it had been in his mind continually during his walk, and he had been imagining ways of cajoling and tempting the weaver to part with the immediate possession of his money for the sake of receiving interest. Dunstan felt as if there must be a little frightening added to the cajolery, for his own arithmetical convictions were not clear enough to afford him any forcible demonstration as to the advantages of interest; and as for security, he regarded it vaguely as a means of cheating a man by making him believe that he would be paid. Altogether, the operation on the miser's mind was a task that Godfrey would be sure to hand over to his more daring and cunning brother: Dunstan had made up his mind to that; and by the time he saw the light gleaming through the chinks of Marner's shutters, the idea of a dialogue with the weaver had become so familiar to him, that it occurred to him as quite a natural thing to make the acquaintance forthwith. There might be several conveniences attending this course: the weaver had possibly got a lantern, and Dunstan was tired of feeling his way. He was still nearly three quarters of a mile from home, and the lane was becoming unpleasantly slippery, for the mist was passing into rain. He turned up the bank, not without some fear lest he might miss the right way, since he was not certain whether the light were in front or on the side of the cottage. But he felt the ground before him cautiously with his whip

handle, and at last arrived safely at the door. He knocked loudly, rather enjoying the idea that the old fellow would be frightened at the sudden noise. He heard no movement in reply: all was silence in the cottage. Was the weaver gone to bed, then? If so, why had he left a light? That was a strange forgetfulness in a miser. Dunstan knocked still more loudly, and, without pausing for a reply, pushed his fingers through the latch-hole, intending to shake the door and pull the latch-string up and down, not doubting that the door was fastened. But, to his surprise, at this double motion the door opened, and he found himself in front of a bright fire, which lit up every corner of the cottage — the bed, the loom, the three chairs, and the table — and showed him that Marner was not there.

Nothing at that moment could be much more inviting to Dunsey than the bright fire on the brick hearth: he walked in and seated himself by it at once. There was something in front of the fire, too, that would have been inviting to a hungry man, if it had been in a different stage of cooking. It was a small bit of pork suspended from the kettle-hanger by a string passed through a large door-key, in a way known to primitive housekeepers unpossessed of jacks. But the pork had been hung at the farthest extremity of the hanger, apparently to prevent the roasting from proceeding too rapidly during the owner's absence. The old staring simpleton had hot meat for his supper, then? thought Dunstan. People had always said he lived on mouldy bread, on purpose to check his appetite. But where could he be at this time, and on such an evening, leaving his supper in this stage of preparation, and his door unfastened? Dunstan's own recent difficulty in making his way

suggested to him that the weaver had perhaps gone outside his cottage to fetch in fuel, or for some such brief purpose, and had slipped into the Stone-pit. That was an interesting idea to Dunstan, carrying consequences of entire novelty. If the weaver was dead, who had a right to his money? Who would know where his money was hidden? *Who would know that anybody had come to take it away?* He went no farther into the subtleties of evidence: the pressing question, "Where *is* the money?" now took such entire possession of him as to make him quite forget that the weaver's death was not a certainty. A dull mind, once arriving at an inference that flatters a desire, is rarely able to retain the impression that the notion from which the inference started was purely problematic. And Dunstan's mind was as dull as the mind of a possible felon usually is. There were only three hiding-places where he had ever heard of cottagers' hoards being found: the thatch, the bed, and a hole in the floor. Marner's cottage had no thatch, and Dunstan's first act, after a train of thought made rapid by the stimulus of cupidity, was to go up to the bed; but while he did so, his eyes travelled eagerly over the floor, where the bricks, distinct in the firelight, were discernible under the sprinkling of sand. But not everywhere; for there was one spot, and one only, which was quite covered with sand, and sand showing the marks of fingers which had apparently been careful to spread it over a given space. It was near the treadles of the loom. In an instant Dunstan darted to that spot, swept away the sand with his whip, and, inserting the thin end of the hook between the bricks, found that they were loose. In haste he lifted up two bricks, and saw what he had no doubt

was the object of his search; for what could there be but money in those two leathern bags? And, from their weight, they must be filled with guineas. Dunstan felt round the hole, to be certain that it held no more; then hastily replaced the bricks, and spread the sand over them. Hardly more than five minutes had passed since he entered the cottage, but it seemed to Dunstan like a long while; and though he was without any distinct recognition of the possibility that Marner might be alive, and might reënter the cottage at any moment, he felt an undefinable dread laying hold on him as he rose to his feet with the bags in his hand. He would hasten out into the darkness, and then consider what he should do with the bags. He closed the door behind him immediately, that he might shut in the stream of light: a few steps would be enough to carry him beyond betrayal by the gleams from the shutter-chinks and the latch-hole. The rain and darkness had got thicker, and he was glad of it; though it was awkward walking with both hands filled, so that it was as much as he could do to grasp his whip along with one of the bags. But when he had gone a yard or two, he might take his time. So he stepped forward into the darkness.

CHAPTER V.

When Dunstan Cass turned his back on the cottage, Silas Marner was not more than a hundred yards away from it, plodding along from the village with a sack thrown round his shoulders as an overcoat, and with a horn lantern in his hand. His legs were weary, but his mind was at ease, free from the presentiment

of change. The sense of security more frequently springs from habit than from conviction, and for this reason it often subsists after such a change in the conditions as might have been expected to suggest alarm. The lapse of time during which a given event has not happened is, in this logic of habit, constantly alleged as a reason why the event should never happen, even when the lapse of time is precisely the added condition which makes the event imminent. A man will tell you that he has worked in a mine for forty years unhurt by an accident, as a reason why he should apprehend no danger, though the roof is beginning to sink; and it is often observable, that the older a man gets, the more difficult it is to him to retain a believing conception of his own death. This influence of habit was necessarily strong in a man whose life was so monotonous as Marner's — who saw no new people and heard of no new events to keep alive in him the idea of the unexpected and the changeful; and it explains, simply enough, why his mind could be at ease, though he had left his house and his treasure more defenceless than usual. Silas was thinking with double complacency of his supper: first, because it would be hot and savory; and, secondly, because it would cost him nothing. For the little bit of pork was a present from that excellent housewife, Miss Priscilla Lammeter, to whom he had this day carried home a handsome piece of linen; and it was only on occasion of a present like this that Silas indulged himself with roast meat. Supper was his favorite meal, because it came at his time of revelry, when his heart warmed over his gold; whenever he had roast meat, he always chose to have it for supper But this evening, he had no sooner ingen

iously knotted his string fast round his bit of pork, twisted the string according to rule over his door-key, passed it through the handle, and made it fast on the hanger, than he remembered that a piece of very fine twine was indispensable to his "setting up" a new piece of work in his loom early in the morning. It had slipped his memory, because, in coming from Mr. Lammeter's, he had not had to pass through the village; but to lose time by going on errands in the morning was out of the question. It was a nasty fog to turn out into, but there were things Silas loved better than his own comfort; so, drawing his pork to the extremity of the hanger, and arming himself with his lantern and his old sack, he set out on what, in ordinary weather, would have been a twenty minutes' errand. He could not have locked his door without undoing his well-knotted string and retarding his supper; it was not worth his while to make that sacrifice. What thief would find his way to the Stone-pits on such a night as this? and why should he come on this particular night, when he had never come through all the fifteen years before? These questions were not distinctly present in Silas's mind; they merely serve to represent the vaguely felt foundation of his freedom from anxiety.

He reached his door in much satisfaction that his errand was done: he opened it, and to his short-sighted eyes everything remained as he had left it, except that the fire sent out a welcome increase of heat. He trod about the floor while putting by his lantern and throwing aside his hat and sack, so as to merge the marks of Dunstan's feet on the sand in the marks of his own nailed boots. Then he moved his pork nearer to the fire, and sat down to the agreeable business of tending the meat and warming himself at the same time.

Any one who had looked at him as the red light shone upon his pale face, strange straining eyes, and meagre form, would perhaps have understood the mixture of contemptuous pity, dread, and suspicion with which he was regarded by his neighbors in Raveloe. Yet few men could be more harmless than poor Marner. In his truthful simple soul, not even the growing greed and worship of gold could beget any vice directly injurious to others. The light of his faith quite put out, and his affections made desolate, he had clung with all the force of his nature to his work and his money; and like all objects to which a man devotes himself, they had fashioned him into correspondence with themselves. His loom, as he wrought in it without ceasing, had in its turn wrought on him, and confirmed more and more the monotonous craving for its monotonous response. His gold, as he hung over it and saw it grow, gathered his power of loving together into a hard isolation like its own.

As soon as he was warm he began to think it would be a long while to wait till after supper before he drew out his guineas, and it would be pleasant to see them on the table before him as he ate his unwonted feast. For joy is the best of wine, and Silas's guineas were a golden wine of that sort.

He rose and placed his candle unsuspectingly on the floor near his loom, swept away the sand without noticing any change, and removed the bricks. The sight of the empty hole made his heart leap violently, but the belief that his gold was gone could not come at once — only terror, and the eager effort to put an end to the terror. He passed his trembling hand all about the hole trying to think it possible that his eyes had deceived him: then he held the candle in the hole

and examined it curiously, trembling more and more. At last he shook so violently that he let fall the candle, and lifted his hands to his head, trying to steady himself, that he might think. Had he put his gold somewhere else, by a sudden resolution last night, and then forgotten it? A man falling into dark water seeks a momentary footing even on sliding stones; and Silas, by acting as if he believed in false hopes, warded off the moment of despair. He searched in every corner, he turned his bed over, and shook it, and kneaded it; he looked in his brick oven where he laid his sticks. When there was no other place to be searched, he kneeled down again, and felt once more all round the hole. There was no untried refuge left for a moment's shelter from the terrible truth.

Yes, there was a sort of refuge which always comes with the prostration of thought under an overpowering passion: it was that expectation of impossibilities, that belief in contradictory images, which is still distinct from madness, because it is capable of being dissipated by the external fact. Silas got up from his knees trembling, and looked round at the table: did n't the gold lie there after all? The table was bare. Then he turned and looked behind him — looked all round his dwelling, seeming to strain his brown eyes after some possible appearance of the bags, where he had already sought them in vain. He could see every object in his cottage — and his gold was not there.

Again he put his trembling hands to his head, and gave a wild ringing scream, the cry of desolation. For a few moments after, he stood motionless; but the cry had relieved him from the first maddening pressure of the truth. He turned, and tottered towards his loom, and got into the seat where he worked,

instinctively seeking this as the strongest assurance of reality.

And now that all the false hopes had vanished, and the first shock of certainty was past, the idea of a thief began to present itself, and he entertained it eagerly, because a thief might be caught and made to restore the gold. The thought brought some new strength with it, and he started from his loom to the door. As he opened it, the rain beat in upon him, for it was falling more and more heavily. There were no footsteps to be tracked on such a night — footsteps? When had the thief come? During Silas's absence in the daytime the door had been locked, and there had been no marks of any inroad on his return by daylight. And in the evening, too, he said to himself, everything was the same as when he had left it. The sand and bricks looked as if they had not been moved. *Was* it a thief who had taken the bags? or was it a cruel power that no hands could reach, which had delighted in making him a second time desolate? He shrank from this vaguer dread, and fixed his mind with struggling effort on the robber with hands, who could be reached by hands. His thoughts glanced at all the neighbors who had made any remarks, or asked any questions which he might now regard as a ground of suspicion. There was Jem Rodney, a known poacher, and otherwise disreputable; he had often met Marner in his journeys across the fields, and had said something jestingly about the weaver's money; nay, he had once irritated Marner, by lingering at the fire when he called to light his pipe, instead of going about his business. Jem Rodney was the man — there was ease in the thought. Jem could be found and made to restore the money: Marner did not want to punish

him, but only to get back his gold which had gone from him, and left his soul like a forlorn traveller on an unknown desert. The robber must be laid hold of. Marner's ideas of legal authority were confused, but he felt that he must go and proclaim his loss; and the great people in the village — the clergyman, the constable, and Squire Cass — would make Jem Rodney, or somebody else, deliver up the stolen money. He rushed out in the rain, under the stimulus of this hope, forgetting to cover his head, not caring to fasten his door; for he felt as if he had nothing left to lose. He ran swiftly till want of breath compelled him to slacken his pace as he was entering the village at the turning close to the Rainbow.

The Rainbow, in Marner's view, was a place of luxurious resort for rich and stout husbands, whose wives had superfluous stores of linen; it was the place where he was likely to find the powers and dignities of Raveloe, and where he could most speedily make his loss public. He lifted the latch, and turned into the bright bar or kitchen on the right hand, where the less lofty customers of the house were in the habit of assembling, the parlor on the left being reserved for the more select society in which Squire Cass frequently enjoyed the double pleasure of conviviality and condescension. But the parlor was dark to-night, the chief personages who ornamented its circle being all at Mrs. Osgood's birthday dance, as Godfrey Cass was. And in consequence of this, the party on the high-screened seats in the kitchen was more numerous than usual; several personages, who would otherwise have been admitted into the parlor and enlarged the opportunity of hectoring and condescension for their betters, being content this evening to vary their enjoy

ment by taking their spirits-and-water where they could themselves hector and condescend in company that called for beer.

CHAPTER VI.

THE conversation, which was at a high pitch of animation when Silas approached the door of the Rainbow, had, as usual, been slow and intermittent when the company first assembled. The pipes began to be puffed in a silence which had an air of severity; the more important customers, who drank spirits and sat nearest the fire, staring at each other as if a bet were depending on the first man who winked; while the beer-drinkers, chiefly men in fustian jackets and smock-frocks, kept their eyelids down and rubbed their hands across their mouths, as if their draughts of beer were a funereal duty attended with embarrassing sadness. At last, Mr. Snell, the landlord, a man of a neutral disposition, accustomed to stand aloof from human differences as those of beings who were all alike in need of liquor, broke silence by saying in a doubtful tone to his cousin the butcher, —

"Some folks 'ud say that was a fine beast you druv in yesterday, Bob?"

The butcher, a jolly, smiling, red-haired man, was not disposed to answer rashly. He gave a few puffs before he spat and replied, "And they would n't be fur wrong, John."

After this feeble delusive thaw, the silence set in as severely as before.

"Was it a red Durham?" said the farrier, taking up the thread of discourse after the lapse of a few minutes.

The farrier looked at the landlord, and the landlord looked at the butcher, as the person who must take the responsibility of answering.

"Red it was," said the butcher, in his good-humored husky treble, "and a Durham it was."

"Then you need n't tell *me* who you bought it of," said the farrier, looking round with some triumph; "I know who it is has got the red Durhams o' this country-side. And she 'd a white star on her brow, I 'll bet a penny?" The farrier leaned forward with his hands on his knees as he put this question, and his eyes twinkled knowingly.

"Well; yes — she might," said the butcher slowly, considering that he was giving a decided affirmative. "I don't say contrairy."

"I knew that very well," said the farrier, throwing himself backward again, and speaking defiantly; "if *I* don't know Mr. Lammeter's cows, I should like to know who does — that 's all. And as for the cow you 've bought, bargain or no bargain, I 've been at the drenching of her — contradick me who will."

The farrier looked fierce, and the mild butcher's conversational spirit was roused a little.

"I 'm not for contradicking no man," he said; "I 'm for peace and quietness. Some are for cutting long ribs — I 'm for cutting 'em short, myself; but *I* don't quarrel with 'em. All I say is, it 's a lovely carkiss — and anybody as was reasonable, it 'ud bring tears into their eyes to look at it."

"Well, it 's the cow as I drenched, whatever it is," pursued the farrier angrily; "and it was Mr. Lammeter's cow, else you told a lie when you said it was a red Durham."

"I tell no lies," said the butcher, with the same

mild huskiness as before, "and I contradick none — not if a man was to swear himself black: he 's no meat o' mine, nor none o' my bargains. All I say is, it 's a lovely carkiss. And what I say, I 'll stick to: but I 'll quarrel wi' no man."

"No," said the farrier, with bitter sarcasm, looking at the company generally; "and p'rhaps you are n't pig-headed; and p'rhaps you did n't say the cow was a red Durham; and p'rhaps you did n't say she 'd got a star on her brow — stick to that, now you 're at it."

"Come, come," said the landlord; "let the cow alone. The truth lies atween you: you 're both right and both wrong, as I allays say. And as for the cow's being Mr. Lammeter's, I say nothing to that; but this I say, as the Rainbow 's the Rainbow. And for the matter o' that, if the talk is to be o' the Lammeters, *you* know the most upo' that head, eh, Mr. Macey? You remember when first Mr. Lammeter's father come into these parts, and took the Warrens?"

Mr. Macey, tailor and parish-clerk, the latter of which functions rheumatism had of late obliged him to share with a small-featured young man who sat opposite him, held his white head on one side, and twirled his thumbs with an air of complacency, slightly seasoned with criticism. He smiled pityingly, in answer to the landlord's appeal, and said, —

"Ay, ay; I know, I know; but I let other folks talk. I 've laid by now, and gev up to the young uns. Ask them as have been to school at Tarley: they 've learnt pernouncing; that 's come up since my day."

"If you 're pointing at me, Mr. Macey," said the deputy-clerk, with an air of anxious propriety, "I 'm nowise a man to speak out of my place. As the psalm says, —

'I know what 's right, nor only so,
But also practise what I know.' "

"Well, then, I wish you 'd keep hold o' the tune when it 's set for you; if you 're for practising, I wish you 'd practise that," said a large, jocose-looking man, an excellent wheelwright in his week-day capacity, but on Sundays leader of the choir. He winked, as he spoke, at two of the company, who were known officially as the "bassoon" and the "key-bugle," in the confidence that he was expressing the sense of the musical profession in Raveloe.

Mr. Tookey, the deputy-clerk, who shared the unpopularity common to deputies, turned very red, but replied, with careful moderation: "Mr. Winthrop, if you 'll bring me any proof as I 'm in the wrong, I 'm not the man to say I won't alter. But there 's people set up their own ears for a standard, and expect the whole choir to follow 'em. There may be two opinions, I hope."

"Ay, ay," said Mr. Macey, who felt very well satisfied with this attack on youthful presumption; "you 're right there, Tookey. There 's allays two 'pinions there 's the 'pinion a man has of himsen, and there 's the 'pinion other folks have on him. There 'd be two 'pinions about a cracked bell, if the bell could hear itself."

"Well, Mr. Macey," said poor Tookey, serious amidst the general laughter, "I undertook to partially fill up the office of parish-clerk by Mr. Crackenthorp's desire, whenever your infirmities should make you unfitting; and it 's one of the rights thereof to sing in the choir — else why have you done the same yourself?"

"Ah! but the old gentleman and you are two folks

said Ben Winthrop. "The old gentleman 's got a gift. Why, the Squire used to invite him to take a glass. only to hear him sing the 'Red Rovier;' did n't he, Mr. Macey? It 's a nat'ral gift. There 's my little lad Aaron, he 's got a gift — he can sing a tune off straight, like a throstle. But as for you, Master Tookey, you 'd better stick to your 'Amens:' your voice is well enough when you keep it up in your nose It 's your inside as is n't right made for music: it 's no better nor a hollow stalk."

This kind of unflinching frankness was the most piquant form of joke to the company at the Rainbow, and Ben Winthrop's insult was felt by everybody to have capped Mr. Macey's epigram.

"I see what it is plain enough," said Mr. Tookey, unable to keep cool any longer. "There 's a consperacy to turn me out o' the choir, as I should n't share the Christmas money — that 's where it is. But I shall speak to Mr. Crackenthorp; I 'll not be put upon by no man."

"Nay, nay, Tookey," said Ben Winthrop. "We 'll pay you your share to keep out of it — that 's what we 'll do. There 's things folks 'ud pay to be rid on, besides varmin."

"Come, come," said the landlord, who felt that paying people for their absence was a principle dangerous to society; "a joke 's a joke. We 're all good friends here, I hope. We must give and take. You 're both right and you 're both wrong, as I say. I agree wi' Mr. Macey here, as there 's two opinions; and if mine was asked, I should say they 're both right. Tookey 's right and Winthrop 's right, and they 've only got to split the difference and make themselves even."

The farrier was puffing his pipe rather fiercely, in

some contempt at this trivial discussion. He had no ear for music himself, and never went to church, as being of the medical profession, and likely to be in requisition for delicate cows. But the butcher, having music in his soul, had listened with a divided desire for Tookey's defeat, and for the preservation of the peace.

"To be sure," he said, following up the landlord's conciliatory view, "we 're fond of our old clerk; it 's nat'ral, and him used to be such a singer, and got a brother as is known for the first fiddler in this country-side. Eh, it 's a pity but what Solomon lived in our village, and could give us a tune when we liked; eh, Mr. Macey? I 'd keep him in liver and lights for nothing — that I would."

"Ay, ay," said Mr. Macey, in the height of complacency; "our family 's been known for musicianers as far back as anybody can tell. But them things are dying out, as I tell Solomon every time he comes round; there 's no voices like what there used to be, and there 's nobody remembers what we remember, if it is n't the old crows."

"Ay, you remember when first Mr. Lammeter's father come into these parts, don't you, Mr. Macey?" said the landlord.

"I should think I did," said the old man, who had now gone through that complimentary process necessary to bring him up to the point of narration; "and a fine old gentleman he was — as fine, and finer nor the Mr. Lammeter as now is. He came from a bit north-'ard, so far as I could ever make out. But there 's nobody rightly knows about those parts: only it could n't be far north'ard, nor much different from this country, for he brought a fine breed o' sheep with

him, so there must be pastures there, and everything reasonable. We heared tell as he 'd sold his own land to come and take the Warrens, and that seemed odd for a man as had land of his own, to come and rent a farm in a strange place. But they said it was along of his wife's dying; though there 's reasons in things as nobody knows on — that 's pretty much what I 've made out; yet some folks are so wise, they 'll find you fifty reasons straight off, and all the while the real reason 's winking at 'em in the corner, and they niver see 't. Howsomever, it was soon seen as we 'd got a new parish'ner as know'd the rights and customs o' things, and kep' a good house, and was well looked on by everybody. And the young man — that 's the Mr. Lammeter as now is, for he 'd niver a sister — soon begun to court Miss Osgood, that 's the sister o' the Mr. Osgood as now is, and a fine handsome lass she was — eh, you can't think — they pretend this young lass is like her, but that 's the way wi' people as don't know what come before 'em. *I* should know, for I helped the old rector, Mr. Drumlow as was, — I helped him marry 'em."

Here Mr. Macey paused; he always gave his narrative in instalments, expecting to be questioned according to precedent.

"Ay, and a partic'lar thing happened, did n't it, Mr. Macey, so as you were likely to remember that marriage?" said the landlord, in a congratulatory tone.

"I should think there did — a *very* partic'lar thing, said Mr. Macey, nodding sideways. "For Mr. Drumlow — poor old gentleman, I was fond on him, though he 'd got a bit confused in his head, what wi' age and wi' taking a drop o' summat warm when the service

come of a cold morning. And young Mr. Lammeter, he 'd have no way but he must be married in Janiwary, which, to be sure, 's a unreasonable time to be married in, for it is n't like a christening or a burying, as you can't help; and so Mr. Drumlow — poor old gentleman, I was fond on him — but when he come to put the questions, he put 'em by the rule o' contrairy, like, and he says, 'Wilt thou have this man to thy wedded wife?' says he, and then he says, 'Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded husband?' says he. But the partic'larest thing of all is, as nobody took any notice on it but me, and they answered straight off 'Yes,' like as if it had been me saying 'Amen' i' the right place, without listening to what went before."

"But *you* knew what was going on well enough, did n't you, Mr. Macey? You were live enough, eh?" said the butcher.

"Lor' bless you!" said Mr. Macey, pausing, and smiling in pity at the impotence of his hearer's imagination; "why, I was all of a tremble; it was as if I 'd been a coat pulled by the two tails, like; for I could n't stop the parson, I could n't take upon me to do that; and yet I said to myself, I says, 'Suppose they should n't be fast married, 'cause the words are contrairy?' and my head went working like a mill, for I was allays uncommon for turning things over and seeing all round 'em; and I says to myself, 'Is 't the meanin' or the words as makes folks fast i' wedlock?' For the parson meant right, and the bride and bridegroom meant right. But then, when I come to think on it, meanin' goes but a little way i' most things, for you may mean to stick things together and your glue may be bad, and then where are you? And so I says

to mysen, 'It is n't the meanin', it 's the glue.' And I was worreted as if I 'd got three bells to pull at once, when we went into the vestry, and they begun to sign their names. But where 's the use o' talking? — you can't think what goes on in a 'cute man's inside."

"But you held in for all that, did n't you, Mr Macey?" said the landlord.

"Ay, I held in tight till I was by mysen wi' Mr. Drumlow, and then I out wi' everything, but respectful, as I allays did. And he made light on it, and he says, 'Pooh, pooh, Macey, make yourself easy,' he says; 'it 's neither the meaning nor the words — it 's the regester does it — that 's the glue.' So you see he settled it easy; for parsons and doctors know everything by heart, like, so as they are n't worreted wi' thinking what 's the rights and wrongs o' things, as I 'n been many and many 's the time. And sure enough the wedding turned out all right, on'y poor Mrs. Lammeter — that 's Miss Osgood as was — died afore the lasses was growed up; but for prosperity and everything respectable, there 's no family more looked on."

Every one of Mr. Macey's audience had heard this story many times, but it was listened to as if it had been a favorite tune, and at certain points the puffing of the pipes was momentarily suspended, that the listeners might give their whole minds to the expected words. But there was more to come; and Mr. Snell, the landlord, duly put the leading question.

"Why, old Mr. Lammeter had a pretty fortin, did n't they say, when he come into these parts?"

"Well, yes," said Mr. Macey; "but I dare say it 's as much as this Mr. Lammeter 's done to keep it whole For there was allays a talk as nobody could get rich

on the Warrens: though he holds it cheap, for it 's what they call Charity Land."

"Ay, and there 's few folks know so well as you how it come to be Charity Land, eh, Mr. Macey?" said the butcher.

"How should they?" said the old clerk, with some contempt. "Why, my grandfather made the grooms' livery for that Mr. Cliff as came and built the big stables at the Warrens. Why, they 're stables four times as big as Squire Cass's, for he thought o' nothing but hosses and hunting, Cliff did n't — a Lunnon tailor, some folks said, as had gone mad wi' cheating. For he could n't ride; lor' bless you! they said he 'd got no more grip o' the hoss than if his legs had been cross-sticks: my grandfather heared old Squire Cass say so many and many a time. But ride he would, as if Old Harry had been a-driving him; and he 'd a son, a lad o' sixteen; and nothing would his father have him do, but he must ride and ride — though the lad was frighted, they said. And it was a common saying as the father wanted to ride the tailor out o' the lad, and make a gentleman on him — not but what I 'm a tailor myself, but in respect as God made me such, I 'm proud on it, for 'Macey, Tailor,' 's been wrote up over our door since afore the Queen's heads went out on the shillings. But Cliff, he was ashamed o' being called a tailor, and he was sore vexed as his riding was laughed at, and nobody o' the gentlefolks hereabout could abide him. Howsomever, the poor lad got sickly and died, and the father did n't live long after him, for he got queerer nor ever, and they said he used to go out i' the dead o' the night, wi' a lantern in his hand, to the stables, and set a lot o' lights burning, for he got as he could n't sleep; and there he 'd stand, cracking his

whip and looking at his hosses; and they said it was a mercy as the stables did n't get burnt down wi' the poor dumb creaturs in 'em. But at last he died raving, and they found as he 'd left all his property, Warrens and all, to a Lunnon Charity, and that 's how the Warrens come to be Charity Land; though, as for the stables, Mr. Lammeter never uses 'em — they 're out o' all charicter — lor' bless you! if you was to set the doors a-banging in 'em, it 'ud sound like thunder half o'er the parish."

"Ay, but there 's more going on in the stables than what folks see by daylight, eh, Mr. Macey?" said the landlord.

"Ay, ay; go that way of a dark night, that 's all," said Mr. Macey, winking mysteriously, "and then make believe, if you like, as you did n't see lights i' the stables, nor hear the stamping o' the hosses, nor the cracking o' the whips, and howling, too, if it 's tow'rt daybreak. 'Cliff's Holiday' has been the name of it ever sin' I were a boy; that 's to say, some said as it was the holiday Old Harry gev him from roasting, like. That 's what my father told me, and he was a reasonable man, though there 's folks nowadays know what happened afore they were born better nor they know their own business."

"What do you say to that, eh, Dowlas?" said the landlord, turning to the farrier, who was swelling with impatience for his cue. "There 's a nut for *you* to crack."

Mr. Dowlas was the negative spirit in the company, and was proud of his position.

"Say? I say what a man *should* say as does n't shut his eyes to look at a finger-post. I say, as I 'm ready to wager any man ten pound, if he 'll stand out wi' me

any dry night in the pasture before the Warren stables, as we shall neither see lights nor hear noises, if it is n't the blowing of our own noses. That 's what I say, and I 've said it many a time; but there 's nobody 'ull ventur a ten-pun' note on their ghos'es as they make so sure of."

"Why, Dowlas, that 's easy betting, that is," said Ben Winthrop. "You might as well bet a man as he would n't catch the rheumatise if he stood up to 's neck in the pool of a frosty night. It 'ud be fine fun for a man to win his bet as he 'd catch the rheumatise. Folks as believe in Cliff's Holiday are n't a-going to ventur near it for a matter o' ten pound."

"If Master Dowlas wants to know the truth on it," said Mr. Macey, with a sarcastic smile, tapping his thumbs together, "he 's no call to lay any bet — let him go and stan' by himself — there 's nobody 'ull hinder him; and then he can let the parish'ners know if they 're wrong."

"Thank you! I 'm obliged to you," said the farrier, with a snort of scorn. "If folks are fools, it 's no business o' mine. *I* don't want to make out the truth about ghos'es: I know it a'ready. But I 'm not against a bet — everything fair and open. Let any man bet me ten pound as I shall see Cliff's Holiday, and I 'll go and stand by myself. I want no company. I 'd as lief do it as I 'd fill this pipe."

"Ah, but who 's to watch you, Dowlas, and see you do it? That 's no fair bet," said the butcher.

"No fair bet?" replied Mr. Dowlas angrily. "I should like to hear any man stand up and say I want to bet unfair. Come now, Master Lundy, I should like to hear you say it."

"Very like you would," said the butcher. "But

it 's no business o' mine. You 're none o' my bargains, and I are n't a-going to try and 'bate your price. If anybody 'll bid for you at your own vallying, let him. I 'm for peace and quietness, I am."

"Yes, that 's what every yapping cur is, when you hold a stick up at him," said the farrier. "But I 'm afraid o' neither man nor ghost, and I 'm ready to lay a fair bet. *I* are n't a turn-tail cur."

"Ay, but there 's this in it, Dowlas," said the landlord, speaking in a tone of much candor and tolerance. "There 's folks, i' my opinion, they can't see ghos'es, not if they stood as plain as a pike-staff before 'em. And there 's reason i' that. For there 's my wife, now, can't smell, not if she 'd the strongest o' cheese under her nose. I never see'd a ghost myself, but then I says to myself, 'Very like I have n't got the smell for 'em.' I mean, putting a ghost for a smell, or else contrairiways. And so, I 'm for holding with both sides; for, as I say, the truth lies between 'em. And if Dowlas was to go and stand, and say he 'd never seen a wink o' Cliff's Holiday all the night through, I 'd back him; and if anybody said as Cliff's Holiday was certain sure, for all that, I 'd back *him* too. For the smell 's what I go by."

The landlord's analogical argument was not well received by the farrier — a man intensely opposed to compromise.

"Tut, tut," he said, setting down his glass with refreshed irritation; "what 's the smell got to do with it? Did ever a ghost give a man a black eye? That 's what I should like to know. If ghos'es want me to believe in 'em, let 'em leave off skulking i' the dark and i' lone places — let 'em come where there 's company and candles."

"As if ghos'es 'ud want to be believed in by anybody so ignirant!" said Mr. Macey, in deep disgust at the farrier's crass incompetence to apprehend the conditions of ghostly phenomena.

CHAPTER VII.

YET the next moment there seemed to be some evidence that ghosts had a more condescending disposition than Mr. Macey attributed to them, for the pale thin figure of Silas Marner was suddenly seen standing in the warm light, uttering no word, but looking round at the company with his strange unearthly eyes. The long pipes gave a simultaneous movement, like the antennæ of startled insects, and every man present, not excepting even the skeptical farrier, had an impression that he saw, not Silas Marner in the flesh, but an apparition; for the door by which Silas had entered was hidden by the high-screened seats, and no one had noticed his approach. Mr. Macey, sitting a long way off the ghost, might be supposed to have felt an argumentative triumph, which would tend to neutralize his share of the general alarm. Had he not always said that when Silas Marner was in that strange trance of his, his soul went loose from his body? Here was the demonstration; nevertheless, on the whole, he would have been as well contented without it. For a few moments there was a dead silence, Marner's want of breath and agitation not allowing him to speak. The landlord, under the habitual sense that he was bound to keep his house open to all company, and confident in the protection of his unbroken neutrality, at last took on himself the task of adjuring the ghost.

"Master Marner," he said, in a conciliatory tone, "what 's lacking to you? What 's your business here?"

"Robbed!" said Silas gaspingly. "I 've been robbed! I want the constable — and the Justice — and Squire Cass — and Mr. Crackenthorp."

"Lay hold on him, Jem Rodney," said the landlord, the idea of a ghost subsiding; "he 's off his head, I doubt. He 's wet through."

Jem Rodney was the outermost man, and sat conveniently near Marner's standing-place; but he declined to give his services.

"Come and lay hold on him yourself, Mr. Snell, if you 've a mind," said Jem rather sullenly. "He 's been robbed, and murdered too, for what I know," he added, in a muttering tone.

"Jem Rodney!" said Silas, turning and fixing his strange eyes on the suspected man.

"Ay, Master Marner, what do ye want wi' me?" said Jem, trembling a little, and seizing his drinking-can as a defensive weapon.

"If it was you stole my money," said Silas, clasping his hands entreatingly, and raising his voice to a cry, "give it me back, — and I won't meddle with you. I won't set the constable on you. Give it me back, and I 'll let you — I 'll let you have a guinea."

"Me stole your money!" said Jem angrily. "I 'll pitch this can at your eye if you talk o' *my* stealing your money."

"Come, come, Master Marner," said the landlord, now rising resolutely, and seizing Marner by the shoulder, "if you 've got any information to lay, speak it out sensible, and show as you 're in your right mind, if you expect anybody to listen to you. You 're as wet

as a drownded rat. Sit down and dry yourself, and speak straightforrard."

"Ah, to be sure, man," said the farrier, who began to feel that he had not been quite on a par with himself and the occasion. "Let 's have no more staring and screaming, else we 'll have you strapped for a madman. That was why I did n't speak at the first — thinks I, the man 's run mad."

"Ay, ay, make him sit down," said several voices at once, well pleased that the reality of ghosts remained still an open question.

The landlord forced Marner to take off his coat, and then to sit down on a chair aloof from every one else, in the centre of the circle, and in the direct rays of the fire. The weaver, too feeble to have any distinct purpose beyond that of getting help to recover his money, submitted unresistingly. The transient fears of the company were now forgotten in their strong curiosity, and all faces were turned towards Silas, when the landlord, having seated himself again, said, —

"Now, then, Master Marner, what 's this you 've got to say — as you 've been robbed? Speak out."

"He 'd better not say again as it was me robbed him," cried Jem Rodney hastily. "What could I ha' done with his money? I could as easy steal the parson's surplice, and wear it."

"Hold your tongue, Jem, and let 's hear what he 's got to say," said the landlord. "Now, then, Master Marner."

Silas now told his story under frequent questioning, as the mysterious character of the robbery became evident.

This strangely novel situation of opening his

trouble to his Raveloe neighbors, of sitting in the warmth of a hearth not his own, and feeling the presence of faces and voices which were his nearest promise of help, had doubtless its influence on Marner, in spite of his passionate preoccupation with his loss. Our consciousness rarely registers the beginning of a growth within us any more than without us: there have been many circulations of the sap before we detect the smallest sign of the bud.

The slight suspicion with which his hearers at first listened to him gradually melted away before the convincing simplicity of his distress: it was impossible for the neighbors to doubt that Marner was telling the truth, not because they were capable of arguing at once from the nature of his statements to the absence of any motive for making them falsely, but because, as Mr Macey observed, "Folks as had the devil to back 'em were not likely to be so mushed" as poor Silas was. Rather, from the strange fact that the robber had left no traces, and had happened to know the nick of time, utterly incalculable by mortal agents, when Silas would go away from home without locking his door, the more probable conclusion seemed to be, that his disreputable intimacy in that quarter, if it ever existed, had been broken up, and that, in consequence, this ill turn had been done to Marner by somebody it was quite in vain to set the constable after. Why this preternatural felon should be obliged to wait till the door was left unlocked was a question which did not present itself.

"It is n't Jem Rodney as has done this work, Master Marner," said the landlord. "You must n't be a-casting your eye at poor Jem. There may be a bit of a reckoning against Jem for the matter of a hare or

so, if anybody was bound to keep their eyes staring open, and niver to wink; but Jem 's been a-sitting here drinking his can, like the decentest man i' the parish, since before you left your house, Master Marner, by your own account."

"Ay, ay," said Mr. Macey, "let 's have no accusing o' the innicent. That is n't the law. There must be folks to swear again' a man before he can be ta'en up. Let 's have no accusing o' the innicent, Master Marner."

Memory was not so utterly torpid in Silas that it could not be wakened by these words. With a movement of compunction, as new and strange to him as everything else within the last hour, he started from his chair and went close up to Jem, looking at him as if he wanted to assure himself of the expression in his face.

"I was wrong," he said; "yes, yes — I ought to have thought. There 's nothing to witness against you, Jem. Only you 'd been into my house oftener than anybody else, and so you came into my head. I don't accuse you — I won't accuse anybody — only," he added, lifting up his hands to his head, and turning away with bewildered misery, "I try — I try to think where my guineas can be."

"Ay, ay, they 're gone where it 's hot enough to melt 'em, I doubt," said Mr. Macey.

"Tchuh!" said the farrier. And then he asked, with a cross-examining air, "How much money might there be in the bags, Master Marner?"

"Two hundred and seventy-two pounds, twelve and sixpence, last night when I counted it," said Silas, seating himself again, with a groan.

"Pooh! why, they 'd be none so heavy to carry

Some tramp 's been in, that 's all; and as for the no footmarks, and the bricks and the sand being all right — why, your eyes are pretty much like a insect's, Master Marner; they 're obliged to look so close, you can't see much at a time. It 's my opinion as, if I 'd been you, or you 'd been me — for it comes to the same thing — you would n't have thought you 'd found everything as you left it. But what I vote is, as two of the sensiblest o' the company should go with you to Master Kench, the constable 's — he 's ill i' bed, I know that much — and get him to appoint one of us his deppity; for that 's the law, and I don't think anybody 'ull take upon him to contradick me there. It is n't much of a walk to Kench's; and then, if it 's me as is deppity, I 'll go back with you, Master Marner, and examine your premises; and if anybody 's got any fault to find with that, I 'll thank him to stand up and say it out like a man."

By this pregnant speech the farrier had reëstablished his self-complacency, and waited with confidence to hear himself named as one of the superlatively sensible men.

"Let us see how the night is, though," said the landlord, who also considered himself personally concerned in this proposition. "Why, it rains heavy still," he said, returning from the door.

"Well, I 'm not the man to be afraid o' the rain,' said the farrier. "For it 'll look bad when Justice Malam hears as respectable men like us had a information laid before 'em and took no steps."

The landlord agreed with this view, and after taking the sense of the company, and duly rehearsing a small ceremony known in high ecclesiastical life as the *nolo episcopari*, he consented to take on himself the chill

dignity of going to Kench's. But to the farrier's strong disgust, Mr. Macey now started an objection to his proposing himself as a deputy-constable; for that oracular old gentleman, claiming to know the law, stated, as a fact delivered to him by his father, that no doctor could be a constable.

"And you 're a doctor, I reckon, though you 're only a cow-doctor — for a fly 's a fly, though it may be a hoss-fly," concluded Mr. Macey, wondering a little at his own "'cuteness."

There was a hot debate upon this, the farrier being of course indisposed to renounce the quality of doctor, but contending that a doctor could be a constable if he liked — the law meant, he need n't be one if he did n't like. Mr. Macey thought this was nonsense, since the law was not likely to be fonder of doctors than of other folks. Moreover, if it was in the nature of doctors more than of other men not to like being constables, how came Mr. Dowlas to be so eager to act in that capacity?

"*I* don't want to act the constable," said the farrier, driven into a corner by this merciless reasoning; "and there 's no man can say it of me, if he 'd tell the truth. But if there 's to be any jealousy and envying about going to Kench's in the rain, let them go as like it — you won't get me to go, I can tell you."

By the landlord's intervention, however, the dispute was accommodated. Mr. Dowlas consented to go as a second person disinclined to act officially; and so poor Silas, furnished with some old coverings, turned out with his two companions into the rain again, thinking of the long night hours before him, not as those do who long to rest, but as those who expect to "watch for the morning."

CHAPTER VIII

When Godfrey Cass returned from Mrs. Osgood's party at midnight, he was not much surprised to learn that Dunsey had not come home. Perhaps he had not sold Wildfire, and was waiting for another chance — perhaps, on that foggy afternoon, he had preferred housing himself at the Red Lion at Batherley for the night, if the run had kept him in that neighborhood; for he was not likely to feel much concern about leaving his brother in suspense. Godfrey's mind was too full of Nancy Lammeter's looks and behavior, too full of the exasperation against himself and his lot, which the sight of her always produced in him, for him to give much thought to Wildfire or to the probabilities of Dunstan's conduct.

The next morning the whole village was excited by the story of the robbery, and Godfrey, like every one else, was occupied in gathering and discussing news about it, and in visiting the Stone-pits. The rain had washed away all possibility of distinguishing foot-marks, but a close investigation of the spot had disclosed, in the direction opposite to the village, a tinder-box, with a flint and steel, half sunk in the mud. It was not Silas's tinder-box, for the only one he had ever had was still standing on his shelf; and the inference generally accepted was, that the tinder-box in the ditch was somehow connected with the robbery. A small minority shook their heads, and intimated their opinion that it was not a robbery to have much light thrown on it by tinder-boxes, that Master Marner's tale had a queer look with it, and that such things had been known as a man's doing himself a mischief, and

then setting the justice to look for the doer. But when questioned closely as to their grounds for this opinion, and what Master Marner had to gain by such false pretences, they only shook their heads as before, and observed that there was no knowing what some folks counted gain; moreover, that everybody had a right to their own opinions, grounds or no grounds, and that the weaver, as everybody knew, was partly crazy. Mr. Macey, though he joined in the defence of Marner against all suspicions of deceit, also pooh-poohed the tinder-box; indeed, repudiated it as a rather impious suggestion, tending to imply that everything must be done by human hands, and that there was no power which could make away with the guineas without moving the bricks. Nevertheless, he turned round rather sharply on Mr. Tookey, when the zealous deputy, feeling that this was a view of the case peculiarly suited to a parish-clerk, carried it still further, and doubted whether it was right to inquire into a robbery at all when the circumstances were so mysterious.

"As if," concluded Mr. Tookey — "as if there was nothing but what could be made out by justices and constables."

"Now, don't you be for overshooting the mark, Tookey," said Mr. Macey, nodding his head aside admonishingly. "That 's what you 're allays at; if I throw a stone and hit, you think there 's summat better than hitting, and you try to throw a stone beyond. What I said was against the tinder-box; I said nothing against justices and constables, for they 're o' King George's making, and it 'ud be ill-becoming a man in a parish office to fly out again' King George."

While these discussions were going on amongst the

group outside the Rainbow a higher consultation was being carried on within, under the presidency of Mr. Crackenthorp, the rector, assisted by Squire Cass and other substantial parishioners. It had just occurred to Mr. Snell, the landlord, — he being, as he observed, a man accustomed to put two and two together, — to connect with the tinder-box which, as deputy-constable, he himself had had the honorable distinction of finding, certain recollections of a pedlar who had called to drink at the house about a month before, and had actually stated that he carried a tinder-box about with him to light his pipe. Here, surely, was a clue to be followed out. And as memory, when duly impregnated with ascertained facts, is sometimes surprisingly fertile, Mr. Snell gradually recovered a vivid impression of the effect produced on him by the pedlar's countenance and conversation. He had a "look with his eye" which fell unpleasantly on Mr. Snell's sensitive organism. To be sure, he did n't say anything particular, — no, except that about the tinder-box, — but it is n't what a man says, it 's the way he says it. Moreover, he had a swarthy foreignness of complexion which boded little honesty.

"Did he wear ear-rings?" Mr. Crackenthorp wished to know, having some acquaintance with foreign customs.

"Well — stay — let me see," said Mr. Snell, like a docile clairvoyant, who would really not make a mistake if she could help it. After stretching the corners of his mouth and contracting his eyes, as if he were trying to see the ear-rings, he appeared to give up the effort, and said, "Well, he 'd got ear-rings in his box to sell, so it 's nat'ral to suppose he might wear 'em. But he called at every house, a'most, in the village

there 's somebody else, mayhap, saw 'em in his ears, though I can't take upon me rightly to say."

Mr. Snell was correct in his surmise, that somebody else would remember the pedlar's ear-rings. For, on the spread of inquiry among the villagers, it was stated with gathering emphasis, that the parson had wanted to know whether the pedlar wore ear-rings in his ears, and an impression was created that a great deal depended on the eliciting of this fact. Of course every one who heard the question, not having any distinct image of the pedlar as *without* ear-rings, immediately had an image of him *with* ear-rings, larger or smaller, as the case might be; and the image was presently taken for a vivid recollection, so that the glazier's wife, a well-intentioned woman, not given to lying, and whose house was among the cleanest in the village, was ready to declare, as sure as ever she meant to take the sacrament the very next Christmas that was ever coming, that she had seen big ear-rings, in the shape of the young moon, in the pedlar's two ears; while Jinny Oates, the cobbler's daughter, being a more imaginative person, stated not only that she had seen them too, but that they had made her blood creep, as it did at that very moment while there she stood.

Also, by way of throwing further light on this clue of the tinder-box, a collection was made of all the articles purchased from the pedlar at various houses, and carried to the Rainbow to be exhibited there. In fact, there was a general feeling in the village, that for the clearing-up of this robbery there must be a great deal done at the Rainbow, and that no man need offer his wife an excuse for going there while it was the scene of severe public duties.

Some disappointment was felt, and perhaps a little indignation also, when it became known that Silas Marner, on being questioned by the Squire and the parson, had retained no other recollection of the pedlar than that he had called at his door, but had not entered his house, having turned away at once when Silas, holding the door ajar, had said that he wanted nothing. This had been Silas's testimony, though he clutched strongly at the idea of the pedlar's being the culprit, if only because it gave him a definite image of a whereabout for his gold, after it had been taken away from its hiding-place: he could see it now in the pedlar's box. But it was observed with some irritation in the village, that anybody but a "blind creatur" like Marner would have seen the man prowling about, for how came he to leave his tinder-box in the ditch close by, if he had n't been lingering there? Doubtless, he had made his observations when he saw Marner at the door. Anybody might know — and only look at him — that the weaver was a half-crazy miser. It was a wonder the pedlar had n't murdered him; men of that sort, with rings in their ears, had been known for murderers often and often; there had been one tried at the 'sizes, not so long ago but what there were people living who remembered it.

Godfrey Cass, indeed, entering the Rainbow during one of Mr. Snell's frequently repeated recitals of his testimony, had treated it lightly, stating that he himself had bought a pen-knife of the pedlar, and thought him a merry grinning fellow enough; it was all nonsense, he said, about the man's evil looks. But this was spoken of in the village as the random talk of youth, "as if it was only Mr. Snell who had seen something odd about the pedlar!" On the contrary, there

were at least half a dozen who were ready to go before Justice Malam, and give in much more striking testimony than any the landlord could furnish. It was to be hoped Mr. Godfrey would not go to Tarley and throw cold water on what Mr. Snell said there, and so prevent the justice from drawing up a warrant. He was suspected of intending this, when, after midday, he was seen setting off on horseback in the direction of Tarley.

But by this time Godfrey's interest in the robbery had faded before his growing anxiety about Dunstan and Wildfire, and he was going, not to Tarley, but to Batherley, unable to rest in uncertainty about them any longer. The possibility that Dunstan had played him the ugly trick of riding away with Wildfire, to return at the end of a month, when he had gambled away or otherwise squandered the price of the horse, was a fear that urged itself upon him more, even, than the thought of an accidental injury; and now that the dance at Mrs. Osgood's was past, he was irritated with himself that he had trusted his horse to Dunstan. Instead of trying to still his fears he encouraged them, with that superstitious impression which clings to us all, that if we expect evil very strongly it is the less likely to come; and when he heard a horse approaching at a trot, and saw a hat rising above a hedge beyond an angle of the lane, he felt as if his conjuration had succeeded. But no sooner did the horse come within sight than his heart sank again. It was not Wildfire; and in a few moments more he discerned that the rider was not Dunstan, but Bryce, who pulled up to speak, with a face that implied something disagreeable.

"Well, Mr. Godfrey, that's a lucky brother of yours, that Master Dunsey, is n't he?"

"What do you mean?" said Godfrey hastily.

"Why, has n't he been home yet?" said Bryce.

"Home? — no. What has happened? Be quick What has he done with my horse?"

"Ah, I thought it was yours, though he pretended you had parted with it to him."

"Has he thrown him down and broken his knees?" said Godfrey, flushed with exasperation.

"Worse than that," said Bryce. "You see, I 'd made a bargain with him to buy the horse for a hundred and twenty — a swinging price, but I always liked the horse. And what does he do but go and stake him, — fly at a hedge with stakes in it, atop of a bank with a ditch before it. The horse had been dead a pretty good while when he was found. So he has n't been home since, has he?"

"Home? — no," said Godfrey, "and he 'd better keep away. Confound me for a fool! I might have known this would be the end of it."

"Well, to tell you the truth," said Bryce, "after I 'd bargained for the horse, it did come into my head that he might be riding and selling the horse without your knowledge, for I did n't believe it was his own. I knew Master Dunsey was up to his tricks sometimes. But where can he be gone? He 's never been seen at Batherley. He could n't have been hurt, for he must have walked off."

"Hurt?" said Godfrey bitterly. "He 'll never be hurt — he 's made to hurt other people."

"And so you *did* give him leave to sell the horse, eh?" said Bryce.

"Yes; I wanted to part with the horse — he was always a little too hard in the mouth for me," said Godfrey; his pride making him wince under the idea

that Bryce guessed the sale to be a matter of necessity. "I was going to see after him — I thought some mischief had happened. I 'll go back now," he added, turning the horse's head, and wishing he could get rid of Bryce; for he felt that the long-dreaded crisis in his life was close upon him. "You 're coming on to Raveloe, are n't you?"

"Well, no, not now," said Bryce. "I *was* coming round there, for I had to go to Flitton, and I thought I might as well take you in my way, and just let you know all I knew myself about the horse. I suppose Master Dunsey did n't like to show himself till the ill news had blown over a bit. He 's perhaps gone to pay a visit at the Three Crowns, by Whitbridge — I know he 's fond of the house."

"Perhaps he is," said Godfrey, rather absently. Then rousing himself, he said, with an effort at carelessness, "We shall hear of him soon enough, I 'll be bound."

"Well, here 's my turning," said Bryce, not surprised to perceive that Godfrey was rather "down;" "so I 'll bid you good-day, and wish I may bring you better news another time."

Godfrey rode along slowly, representing to himself the scene of confession to his father from which he felt that there was now no longer any escape. The revelation about the money must be made the very next morning; and if he withheld the rest, Dunstan would be sure to come back shortly, and, finding that he must bear the brunt of his father's anger, would tell the whole story out of spite, even though he had nothing to gain by it. There was one step, perhaps, by which he might still win Dunstan's silence and put off the evil day: he might tell his father that he had

himself spent the money paid to him by Fowler; and as he had never been guilty of such an offence before, the affair would blow over after a little storming. But Godfrey could not bend himself to this. He felt that in letting Dunstan have the money he had already been guilty of a breach of trust hardly less culpable than that of spending the money directly for his own behoof; and yet there was a distinction between the two acts which made him feel that the one was so much more blackening than the other as to be intolerable to him.

"I don't pretend to be a good fellow," he said to himself; "but I'm not a scoundrel — at least, I'll stop short somewhere. I'll bear the consequences of what I *have* done sooner than make believe I've done what I never would have done. I'd never have spent the money for my own pleasure — I was tortured into it."

Through the remainder of this day Godfrey, with only occasional fluctuations, kept his will bent in the direction of a complete avowal to his father, and he withheld the story of Wildfire's loss till the next morning, that it might serve him as an introduction to heavier matter. The old Squire was accustomed to his son's frequent absence from home, and thought neither Dunstan's nor Wildfire's non-appearance a matter calling for remark. Godfrey said to himself again and again, that if he let slip this one opportunity of confession, he might never have another; the revelation might be made even in a more odious way than by Dunstan's malignity, — *she* might come, as she had threatened to do. And then he tried to make the scene easier to himself by rehearsal: he made up his mind how he would pass from the admission of his

weakness in letting Dunstan have the money to the fact that Dunstan had a hold on him which he had been unable to shake off, and how he would work up his father to expect something very bad before he told him the fact. The old Squire was an implacable man: he made resolutions in violent anger, and he was not to be moved from them after his anger had subsided — as fiery volcanic matters cool and harden into rock. Like many violent and implacable men, he allowed evils to grow under favor of his own heedlessness, till they pressed upon him with exasperating force, and then he turned round with fierce severity and became unrelentingly hard. This was his system with his tenants: he allowed them to get into arrears, neglect their fences, reduce their stock, sell their straw, and otherwise go the wrong way, — and then, when he became short of money in consequence of this indulgence, he took the hardest measures and would listen to no appeal. Godfrey knew all this, and felt it with the greater force because he had constantly suffered annoyance from witnessing his father's sudden fits of unrelentingness, for which his own habitual irresolution deprived him of all sympathy. (He was not critical on the faulty indulgence which preceded these fits; *that* seemed to him natural enough.) Still there was just the chance, Godfrey thought, that his father's pride might see this marriage in a light that would induce him to hush it up, rather than turn his son out and make the family the talk of the country for ten miles round.

This was the view of the case that Godfrey managed to keep before him pretty closely till midnight, and he went to sleep thinking that he had done with inward debating. But when he awoke in the still morning

darkness he found it impossible to reawaken his evening thoughts; it was as if they had been tired out and were not to be roused to further work. Instead of arguments for confession, he could now feel the presence of nothing but its evil consequences: the old dread of disgrace came back — the old shrinking from the thought of raising a hopeless barrier between himself and Nancy — the old disposition to rely on chances which might be favorable to him, and save him from betrayal. Why, after all, should he cut off the hope of them by his own act? He had seen the matter in a wrong light yesterday. He had been in a rage with Dunstan, and had thought of nothing but a thorough break-up of their mutual understanding; but what it would be really wisest for him to do was to try and soften his father's anger against Dunsey, and keep things as nearly as possible in their old condition. If Dunsey did not come back for a few days (and Godfrey did not know but that the rascal had enough money in his pocket to enable him to keep away still longer), everything might blow over.

CHAPTER IX.

Godfrey rose and took his own breakfast earlier than usual, but lingered in the wainscoted parlor till his younger brothers had finished their meal and gone out, awaiting his father, who always took a walk with his managing-man before breakfast. Every one breakfasted at a different hour in the Red House, and the Squire was always the latest, giving a long chance to a rather feeble morning appetite before he tried it. The table had been spread with substantial

eatables nearly two hours before he presented himself — a tall, stout man of sixty, with a face in which the knit brow and rather hard glance seemed contradicted by the slack and feeble mouth. His person showed marks of habitual neglect, his dress was slovenly; and yet there was something in the presence of the old Squire distinguishable from that of the ordinary farmers in the parish, who were perhaps every whit as refined as he, but, having slouched their way through life with a consciousness of being in the vicinity of their "betters," wanted that self-possession and authoritativeness of voice and carriage which belonged to a man who thought of superiors as remote existences, with whom he had personally little more to do than with America or the stars. The Squire had been used to parish homage all his life, used to the presupposition that his family, his tankards, and everything that was his, were the oldest and best; and as he never associated with any gentry higher than himself, his opinion was not disturbed by comparison.

He glanced at his son as he entered the room, and said, "What, sir! have n't *you* had your breakfast yet?" but there was no pleasant morning greeting between them; not because of any unfriendliness, but because the sweet flower of courtesy is not a growth of such homes as the Red House.

"Yes, sir," said Godfrey, "I 've had my breakfast, but I was waiting to speak to you."

"Ah! well," said the Squire, throwing himself indifferently into his chair, and speaking in a ponderous coughing fashion, which was felt in Raveloe to be a sort of privilege of his rank, while he cut a piece of beef, and held it up before the deerhound that had come in with him. "Ring the bell for my ale, will you?

You youngsters' business is your own pleasure, mostly. There 's no hurry about it for anybody but yourselves."

The Squire's life was quite as idle as his sons', but it was a fiction kept up by himself and his contemporaries in Raveloe that youth was exclusively the period of folly, and that their aged wisdom was constantly in a state of endurance mitigated by sarcasm. Godfrey waited, before he spoke again, until the ale had been brought and the door closed — an interval during which Fleet, the deerhound, had consumed enough bits of beef to make a poor man's holiday dinner.

"There 's been a cursed piece of ill-luck with Wildfire," he began; "happened the day before yesterday."

"What! broke his knees?" said the Squire, after taking a draught of ale. "I thought you knew how to ride better than that, sir. I never threw a horse down in my life. If I had, I might ha' whistled for another, for *my* father was n't quite so ready to unstring as some other fathers I know of. But they must turn over a new leaf — *they* must. What with mortgages and arrears I 'm as short o' cash as a roadside pauper. And that fool Kimble says the newspaper 's talking about peace. Why, the country would n't have a leg to stand on. Prices 'ud run down like a jack, and I should never get my arrears, not if I sold all the fellows up. And there 's that damned Fowler, I won't put up with him any longer; I 've told Winthrop to go to Cox this very day. The lying scoundrel told me he 'd be sure to pay me a hundred last month. He takes advantage because he 's on that outlying farm and thinks I shall forget him."

The Squire had delivered this speech in a coughing and interrupted manner, but with no pause long enough

for Godfrey to make it a pretext for taking up the word again. He felt that his father meant to ward off any request for money on the ground of the misfortune with Wildfire, and that the emphasis he had thus been led to lay on his shortness of cash and his arrears was likely to produce an attitude of mind the utmost unfavorable for his own disclosure. But he must go on now he had begun.

"It 's worse than breaking the horse's knees — he 's been staked and killed," he said, as soon as his father was silent, and had begun to cut his meat. "But I was n't thinking of asking you to buy me another horse; I was only thinking I 'd lost the means of paying you with the price of Wildfire as I 'd meant to do. Dunsey took him to the hunt to sell him for me the other day, and after he 'd made a bargain for a hundred and twenty with Bryce he went after the hounds, and took some fool's leap or other that did for the horse at once. If it had n't been for that, I should have paid you a hundred pounds this morning."

The Squire had laid down his knife and fork and was staring at his son in amazement, not being sufficiently quick of brain to form a probable guess as to what could have caused so strange an inversion of the paternal and filial relations as this proposition of his son to pay him a hundred pounds.

"The truth is, sir — I 'm very sorry — I was quite to blame," said Godfrey. "Fowler did pay that hundred pounds. He paid it to me when I was over there one day last month. And Dunsey bothered me for the money, and I let him have it, because I hoped I should be able to pay it you before this."

The Squire was purple with anger before his son had done speaking, and found utterance difficult.

"You let Dunsey have it, sir? And how long have you been so thick with Dunsey that you must *collogue* with him to embezzle my money? Are you turning out a scamp? I tell you I won't have it. I'll turn the whole pack of you out of the house together, and marry again. I'd have you to remember, sir, my property 's got no entail on it; since my grandfather's time the Casses can do as they like with their land. Remember that, sir. Let Dunsey have the money! Why should you let Dunsey have the money? There 's some lie at the bottom of it."

"There 's no lie, sir," said Godfrey. "I would n't have spent the money myself, but Dunsey bothered me, and I was a fool and let him have it. But I meant to pay it whether he did or not. That 's the whole story. I never meant to embezzle money, and I 'm not the man to do it. You never knew me do a dishonest trick, sir."

"Where 's Dunsey, then? What do you stand talking there for? Go and fetch Dunsey, as I tell you, and let him give account of what he wanted the money for, and what he 's done with it. He shall repent it. I 'll turn him out. I said I would, and I 'll do it. He shan't brave me. Go and fetch him."

"Dunsey is n't come back, sir."

"What! did he break his own neck, then?" said the Squire with some disgust at the idea that, in that case, he could not fulfil his threat.

"No, he was n't hurt, I believe, for the horse was found dead, and Dunsey must have walked off. I dare say we shall see him again by and by. I don't know where he is."

"And what must you be letting him have my money for? Answer me that," said the Squire, at

tacking Godfrey again, since Dunsey was not within reach.

"Well, sir, I don't know," said Godfrey hesitatingly. That was a feeble evasion, but Godfrey was not fond of lying, and, not being sufficiently aware that no sort of duplicity can long flourish without the help of vocal falsehoods, he was quite unprepared with invented motives.

"You don't know? I tell you what it is, sir. You've been up to some trick, and you've been bribing him not to tell," said the Squire with a sudden acuteness which startled Godfrey, who felt his heart beat violently at the nearness of his father's guess. The sudden alarm pushed him on to take the next step — a very slight impulse suffices for that on a downward road.

"Why, sir," he said, trying to speak with careless ease, "it was a little affair between me and Dunsey; it's no matter to anybody else. It's hardly worth while to pry into young men's fooleries: it wouldn't have made any difference to you, sir, if I'd not had the bad luck to lose Wildfire. I should have paid you the money."

"Fooleries! Pshaw! it's time you'd done with fooleries. And I'd have you know, sir, you *must* ha' done with 'em," said the Squire, frowning and casting an angry glance at his son. "Your goings-on are not what I shall find money for any longer. There's my grandfather had his stables full o' horses, and kept a good house, too, and in worse times, by what I can make out; and so might I, if I hadn't four good for nothing fellows to hang on me like horse-leeches. I've been too good a father to you all — that's what it is. But I shall pull up, sir."

Godfrey was silent. He was not likely to be very penetrating in his judgments, but he had always had a sense that his father's indulgence had not been kindness, and had had a vague longing for some discipline that would have checked his own errant weakness and helped his better will. The Squire ate his bread and meat hastily, took a deep draught of ale, then turned his chair from the table, and began to speak again.

"It 'll be all the worse for you, you know — you 'd need try and help me keep things together."

"Well, sir, I 've often offered to take the management of things, but you know you 've taken it ill always, and seemed to think I wanted to push you out of your place."

"I know nothing o' your offering or o' my taking it ill," said the Squire, whose memory consisted in certain strong impressions unmodified by detail; "but I know one while you seemed to be thinking o' marrying, and I did n't offer to put any obstacles in your way, as some fathers would. I 'd as lieve you married Lammeter's daughter as anybody. I suppose if I 'd said you nay, you 'd ha' kept on with it; but for want o' contradiction you 've changed your mind. You 're a shilly-shally fellow: you take after your poor mother. She never had a will of her own; a woman has no call for one, if she 's got a proper man for her husband But *your* wife had need have one, for you hardly know your own mind enough to make both your legs walk one way. The lass has n't said downright she won't have you, has she?"

"No," said Godfrey, feeling very hot and uncomfortable; "but I don't think she will."

"Think! why have n't you the courage to ask her?

Do you stick to it, you want to have *her* — that 's the thing ? "

" There 's no other woman I want to marry," said Godfrey evasively.

" Well, then, let me make the offer for you, that 's all, if you have n't the pluck to do it yourself. Lammeter is n't likely to be loath for his daughter to marry into *my* family, I should think. And as for the pretty lass, she would n't have her cousin — and there 's nobody else, as I see, could ha' stood in your way."

" I 'd rather let it be, please, sir, at present," said Godfrey, in alarm. " I think she 's a little offended with me just now, and I should like to speak for myself. A man must manage these things for himself."

" Well, speak then and manage it, and see if you can't turn over a new leaf. That 's what a man must do when he thinks o' marrying."

" I don't see how I can think of it at present, sir. You would n't like to settle me on one of the farms, I suppose, and I don't think she 'd come to live in this house with all my brothers. It 's a different sort of life to what she 's been used to."

" Not come to live in this house ? Don't tell me. You ask her, that 's all," said the Squire, with a short, scornful laugh.

" I 'd rather let the thing be at present, sir," said Godfrey. " I hope you won't try to hurry it on by saying anything."

" I shall do what I choose," said the Squire, " and I shall let you know I 'm master ; else you may turn out and find an estate to drop into somewhere else. Go out and tell Winthrop not to go to Cox's, but wait for me. And tell 'em to get my horse saddled. And, stop : look out and get that hack o' Dunsey's sold,

and hand me the money, will you? He 'll keep no more hacks at my expense. And if you know where he 's sneaking — I dare say you do — you may tell him to spare himself the journey o' coming back home. Let him turn ostler and keep himself. He shan't hang on me any more."

"I don't know where he is; and if I did, it is n't my place to tell him to keep away," said Godfrey, moving towards the door.

"Confound it, sir, don't stay arguing, but go and order my horse," said the Squire, taking up a pipe.

Godfrey left the room, hardly knowing whether he were more relieved by the sense that the interview was ended without having made any change in his position, or more uneasy that he had entangled himself still further in prevarication and deceit. What had passed about his proposing to Nancy had raised a new alarm, lest by some after-dinner words of his father's to Mr. Lammeter he should be thrown into the embarrassment of being obliged absolutely to decline her when she seemed to be within his reach. He fled to his usual refuge, that of hoping for some unforeseen turn of fortune, some favorable chance which would save him from unpleasant consequences — perhaps even justify his insincerity by manifesting its prudence.

In this point of trusting to some throw of fortune's dice Godfrey can hardly be called old-fashioned. Favorable Chance is the god of all men who follow their own devices instead of obeying a law they believe in. Let even a polished man of these days get into a position he is ashamed to avow, and his mind will be bent on all the possible issues that may deliver him from the calculable results of that position. Let him live outside his income, or shirk the resolute

honest work that brings wages, and he will presently find himself dreaming of a possible benefactor, a possible simpleton who may be cajoled into using his interest, a possible state of mind in some possible person not yet forthcoming. Let him neglect the responsibilities of his office, and he will inevitably anchor himself on the chance, that the thing left undone may turn out not to be of the supposed importance. Let him betray his friend's confidence, and he will adore that same cunning complexity called Chance, which gives him the hope that his friend will never know. Let him forsake a decent craft that he may pursue the gentilities of a profession to which nature never called him, and his religion will infallibly be the worship of blessed Chance, which he will believe in as the mighty creator of success. The evil principle deprecated in that religion is the orderly sequence by which the seed brings forth a crop after its kind.

CHAPTER X.

Justice Malam was naturally regarded in Tarley and Raveloe as a man of capacious mind, seeing that he could draw much wider conclusions without evidence than could be expected of his neighbors who were not on the Commission of the Peace. Such a man was not likely to neglect the clue of the tinder-box, and an inquiry was set on foot concerning a pedlar, name unknown, with curly black hair and a foreign complexion, carrying a box of cutlery and jewelry, and wearing large rings in his ears. But either because inquiry was too slow-footed to overtake him, or because the description applied to so many pedlars that inquiry did not

know how to choose among them, weeks passed away, and there was no other result concerning the robbery than a gradual cessation of the excitement it had caused in Raveloe. Dunstan Cass's absence was hardly a subject of remark: he had once before had a quarrel with his father, and had gone off, nobody knew whither, to return at the end of six weeks, take up his old quarters unforbidden, and swagger as usual. His own family, who equally expected this issue, with the sole difference that the Squire was determined this time to forbid him the old quarters, never mentioned his absence, and when his uncle Kimble or Mr. Osgood noticed it, the story of his having killed Wildfire, and committed some offence against his father, was enough to prevent surprise. To connect the fact of Dunsey's disappearance with that of the robbery occurring on the same day, lay quite away from the track of every one's thought — even Godfrey's, who had better reason than any one else to know what his brother was capable of. He remembered no mention of the weaver between them since the time, twelve years ago, when it was their boyish sport to deride him; and, besides, his imagination constantly created an *alibi* for Dunstan: he saw him continually in some congenial haunt, to which he had walked off on leaving Wildfire — saw him sponging on chance acquaintances, and meditating a return home to the old amusement of tormenting his elder brother. Even if any brain in Raveloe had put the said two facts together, I doubt whether a combination so injurious to the prescriptive respectability of a family with a mural monument and venerable tankards would not have been suppressed as of unsound tendency. But Christmas puddings, brawn, and abundance of spirituous liquors, throwing the mental

originality into the channel of nightmare, are great preservatives against a dangerous spontaneity of waking thought.

When the robbery was talked of at the Rainbow and elsewhere, in good company, the balance continued to waver between the rational explanation founded on the tinder-box and the theory of an impenetrable mystery that mocked investigation. The advocates of the tinder-box-and-pedlar view considered the other side a muddle-headed and credulous set, who, because they themselves were wall-eyed, supposed everybody else to have the same blank outlook; and the adherents of the inexplicable more than hinted that their antagonists were animals inclined to crow before they had found any corn, — mere skimming-dishes in point of depth, — whose clear-sightedness consisted in supposing there was nothing behind a barn-door because they could n't see through it; so that, though their controversy did not serve to elicit the fact concerning the robbery, it elicited some true opinions of collateral importance.

But while poor Silas's loss served thus to brush the slow current of Raveloe conversation, Silas himself was feeling the withering desolation of that bereavement about which his neighbors were arguing at their ease. To any one who had observed him before he lost his gold it might have seemed that so withered and shrunken a life as his could hardly be susceptible of a bruise, could hardly endure any subtraction but such as would put an end to it altogether. But in reality it had been an eager life, filled with immediate purpose, which fenced him in from the wide, cheerless unknown. It had been a clinging life; and though the object round which its fibres had clung was a dead disrupted thing, it satisfied the need for clinging. But now the

fence was broken down — the support was snatched away. Marner's thoughts could no longer move in their old round, and were baffled by a blank like that which meets a plodding ant when the earth has broken away on its homeward path. The loom was there, and the weaving, and the growing pattern in the cloth; but the bright treasure in the hole under his feet was gone; the prospect of handling and counting it was gone; the evening had no phantasm of delight to still the poor soul's craving. The thought of the money he would get by his actual work could bring no joy, for its meagre image was only a fresh reminder of his loss; and hope was too heavily crushed by the sudden blow for his imagination to dwell on the growth of a new hoard from that small beginning.

He filled up the blank with grief. As he sat weaving, he every now and then moaned low, like one in pain: it was the sign that his thoughts had come round again to the sudden chasm — to the empty evening time. And all the evening, as he sat in his loneliness by his dull fire, he leaned his elbows on his knees, and clasped his head with his hands, and moaned very low — not as one who seeks to be heard.

And yet he was not utterly forsaken in his trouble. The repulsion Marner had always created in his neighbors was partly dissipated by the new light in which this misfortune had shown him. Instead of a man who had more cunning than honest folks could come by, and, what was worse, had not the inclination to use that cunning in a neighborly way, it was now apparent that Silas had not cunning enough to keep his own. He was generally spoken of as a "poor mushed creatur;" and that avoidance of his neighbors, which had before been referred to his ill-will, and to a prob-

able addiction to worse company, was now considered mere craziness.

This change to a kindlier feeling was shown in various ways. The odor of Christmas cooking being on the wind, it was the season when superfluous pork and black puddings are suggestive of charity in well to do families; and Silas's misfortune had brought him uppermost in the memory of housekeepers like Mrs. Osgood. Mr. Crackenthorp, too, while he admonished Silas that his money had probably been taken from him because he thought too much of it and never came to church, enforced the doctrine by a present of pigs' pettitoes, well calculated to dissipate unfounded prejudices against the clerical character. Neighbors, who had nothing but verbal consolation to give, showed a disposition not only to greet Silas, and discuss his misfortune at some length when they encountered him in the village, but also to take the trouble of calling at his cottage, and getting him to repeat all the details on the very spot; and then they would try to cheer him by saying, "Well, Master Marner, you 're no worse off nor other poor folks, after all; and if you was to be crippled, the parish 'ud give you a 'lowance."

I suppose one reason why we are seldom able to comfort our neighbors with our words is that our good-will gets adulterated, in spite of ourselves, before it can pass our lips. We can send black puddings and pettitoes without giving them a flavor of our own egoism; but language is a stream that is almost sure to smack of a mingled soil. There was a fair proportion of kindness in Raveloe; but it was often of a beery and bungling sort, and took the shape least allied to the complimentary and hypocritical

Mr. Macey, for example, coming one evening expressly to let Silas know that recent events had given him the advantage of standing more favorably in the opinion of a man whose judgment was not formed lightly, opened the conversation by saying, as soon as he had seated himself and adjusted his thumbs, —

"Come, Master Marner, why, you 've no call to sit a-moaning. You 're a deal better off to ha' lost your money, nor to ha' kep' it by foul means. I used to think, when you first come into these parts, as you were no better nor you should be; you were younger a deal than what you are now; but you were allays a staring, white-faced creatur, partly like a bald-faced calf, as I may say. But there 's no knowing: it is n't every queer-looksed thing as Old Harry 's had the making of — I mean, speaking o' toads and such; for they 're often harmless, and useful against varmin. And it 's pretty much the same wi' you, as fur as I can see. Though as to the yarbs and stuff to cure the breathing, if you brought that sort o' knowledge from distant parts, you might ha' been a bit freer of it. And if the knowledge was n't well come by, why, you might ha' made up for it by coming to church reg'lar; for, as for the children as the Wise Woman charmed, I 've been at the christening of 'em again and again, and they took the water just as well. And that 's reasonable; for if Old Harry 's a mind to do a bit o' kindness for a holiday, like, who 's got anything against it? That 's my thinking; and I 've been clerk o' this parish forty year, and I know, when the parson and me does the cussing of a Ash Wednesday, there 's no cussing o' folks as have a mind to be cured without a doctor, let Kimble say what he will. And so, Master Marner, as I was saying — for there 's windings i'

things as they may carry you to the fur end o' the prayer-book afore you get back to 'em — my advice is, as you keep up your sperrits; for as for thinking you 're a deep un, and ha' got more inside you nor 'ull bear daylight, I 'm not o' that opinion at all, and so I tell the neighbors. For, says I, you talk o' Master Marner making out a tale — why, it 's nonsense, that is: it 'ud take a 'cute man to make a tale like that; and, says I, he looked as scared as a rabbit."

During this discursive address Silas had continued motionless in his previous attitude, leaning his elbows on his knees, and pressing his hands against his head. Mr. Macey, not doubting that he had been listened to, paused, in the expectation of some appreciatory reply, but Marner remained silent. He had a sense that the old man meant to be good-natured and neighborly; but the kindness fell on him as sunshine falls on the wretched — he had no heart to taste it, and felt that it was very far off him.

"Come, Master Marner, have you got nothing to say to that?" said Mr. Macey at last, with a slight accent of impatience.

"Oh," said Marner, slowly, shaking his head between his hands, "I thank you — thank you — kindly."

"Ay, ay, to be sure; I thought you would," said Mr. Macey; "and my advice is — have you got a Sunday suit?"

"No," said Marner.

"I doubted it was so," said Mr. Macey. "Now, let me advise you to get a Sunday suit; there 's Tookey, he 's a poor creatur, but he 's got my tailoring business, and some o' my money in it, and he shall make a suit at a low price, and give you trust, and

then you can come to church, and be a bit neighborly. Why, you 've never heared me say 'Amen' since you come into these parts, and I recommend you to lose no time, for it 'll be poor work when Tookey has it all to himself, for I may n't be equil to stand i' the desk at all come another winter." Here Mr. Macey paused, perhaps expecting some sign of emotion in his hearer, but not observing any, he went on. "And as for the money for the suit o' clothes, why, you get a matter of a pound a week at your weaving, Master Marner, and you 're a young man, eh, for all you look so mushed. Why, you could n't ha' been five and twenty when you come into these parts, eh?"

Silas started a little at the change to a questioning tone, and answered mildly, "I don't know; I can't rightly say — it 's a long while since."

After receiving such an answer as this it is not surprising that Mr. Macey observed, later on in the evening at the Rainbow, that Marner's head was "all of a muddle," and that it was to be doubted if he ever knew when Sunday came round, which showed him a worse heathen than many a dog.

Another of Silas's comforters, besides Mr. Macey, came to him with a mind highly charged on the same topic. This was Mrs. Winthrop, the wheelwright's wife. The inhabitants of Raveloe were not severely regular in their church-going, and perhaps there was hardly a person in the parish who would not have held that to go to church every Sunday in the calendar would have shown a greedy desire to stand well with Heaven, and get an undue advantage over their neighbors — a wish to be better than the "common run," that would have implied a reflection on those who had had godfathers and godmothers as well as themselves.

and had an equal right to the burying-service. At the same time it was understood to be requisite for all who were not household servants, or young men, to take the sacrament at one of the great festivals; Squire Cass himself took it on Christmas Day; while those who were held to be "good livers" went to church with greater, though still with moderate, frequency.

Mrs. Winthrop was one of these: she was in all respects a woman of scrupulous conscience, so eager for duties that life seemed to offer them too scantily unless she rose at half-past four, though this threw a scarcity of work over the more advanced hours of the morning, which it was a constant problem with her to remove. Yet she had not the vixenish temper which is sometimes supposed to be a necessary condition of such habits: she was a very mild, patient woman, whose nature it was to seek out all the sadder and more serious elements of life, and pasture her mind upon them. She was the person always first thought of in Raveloe when there was illness or death in a family, when leeches were to be applied, or there was a sudden disappointment in a monthly nurse. She was a "comfortable woman" — good-looking, fresh-complexioned, having her lips always slightly screwed, as if she felt herself in a sick-room with the doctor or the clergyman present. But she was never whimpering; no one had seen her shed tears; she was simply grave and inclined to shake her head and sigh, almost imperceptibly, like a funereal mourner who is not a relation. It seemed surprising that Ben Winthrop, who loved his quart-pot and his joke, got along so well with Dolly; but she took her husband's jokes and joviality as patiently as everything else, considering that "men *would* be so," and viewing the stronger

sex in the light of animals whom it had pleased Heaven to make naturally troublesome, like bulls and turkey-cocks.

This good wholesome woman could hardly fail to have her mind drawn strongly towards Silas Marner now that he appeared in the light of a sufferer, and one Sunday afternoon she took her little boy Aaron with her, and went to call on Silas, carrying in her hand some small lard-cakes, flat paste-like articles, much esteemed in Raveloe. Aaron, an apple-cheeked youngster of seven, with a clean starched frill, which looked like a plate for the apples, needed all his adventurous curiosity to embolden him against the possibility that the big-eyed weaver might do him some bodily injury; and his dubiety was much increased when, on arriving at the Stone-pits, they heard the mysterious sound of the loom.

"Ah, it is as I thought," said Mrs. Winthrop sadly.

They had to knock loudly before Silas heard them, but when he did come to the door he showed no impatience, as he would once have done, at a visit that had been unasked for and unexpected. Formerly, his heart had been as a locked casket with its treasure inside; but now the casket was empty, and the lock was broken. Left groping in darkness, with his prop utterly gone, Silas had inevitably a sense, though a dull and half-despairing one, that if any help came to him it must come from without; and there was a slight stirring of expectation at the sight of his fellow-men, a faint consciousness of dependence on their good-will. He opened the door wide to admit Dolly, but without otherwise returning her greeting than by moving the armchair a few inches as a sign that she was to sit

down in it. Dolly, as soon as she was seated, removed the white cloth that covered her lard-cakes, and said in her gravest way, —

"I'd a baking yisterday, Master Marner, and the lard-cakes turned out better nor common, and I'd ha' asked you to accept some if you'd thought well. I don't eat such things myself, for a bit o' bread's what I like from one year's end to the other, but men's stomichs are made so comical they want a change — they do, I know, God help 'em."

Dolly sighed gently as she held out the cakes to Silas, who thanked her kindly, and looked very close at them, absently, being accustomed to look so at everything he took into his hand — eyed all the while by the wondering bright orbs of the small Aaron, who had made an outwork of his mother's chair, and was peeping round from behind it.

"There's letters pricked on 'em," said Dolly. "I can't read 'em myself, and there's nobody, not Mr. Macey himself, rightly knows what they mean; but they've a good meaning, for they're the same as is on the pulpit-cloth at church. What are they, Aaron, my dear?"

Aaron retreated completely behind his outwork.

"Oh, go, that's naughty," said his mother mildly. "Well, whativer the letters are, they've a good meaning; and it's a stamp as has been in our house, Ben says, ever since he was a little un, and his mother used to put it on the cakes, and I've allays put it on too; for if there's any good, we've need of it i' this world."

"It's I. H. S.," said Silas, at which proof of learning Aaron peeped round the chair again.

"Well, to be sure, you can read 'em off," said Dolly. "Ben's read 'em to me many and many a time.

but they slip out o' my mind again; the more 's the pity, for they 're good letters, else they would n't be in the church; and so I prick 'em on all the loaves and all the cakes, though sometimes they won't hold because o' the rising — for, as I said, if there 's any good to be got we 've need of it i' this world — that we have; and I hope they 'll bring good to you, Master Marner, for it 's wi' that will I brought you the cakes, and you see the letters have held better nor common."

Silas was as unable to interpret the letters as Dolly, but there was no possibility of misunderstanding the desire to give comfort that made itself heard in her quiet tones. He said, with more feeling than before, "Thank you — thank you kindly." But he laid down the cakes and seated himself absently — drearily unconscious of any distinct benefit towards which the cakes and the letters, or even Dolly's kindness, could tend for him.

"Ah, if there 's good anywhere, we 've need of it," repeated Dolly, who did not lightly forsake a serviceable phrase. She looked at Silas pityingly as she went on. "But you did n't hear the church-bells this morning, Master Marner? I doubt you did n't know it was Sunday. Living so lone here, you lose your count, I daresay; and then, when your loom makes a noise, you can't hear the bells, more partic'lar now the frost kills the sound."

"Yes, I did; I heard 'em," said Silas, to whom Sunday bells were a mere accident of the day, and not part of its sacredness. There had been no bells in Lantern Yard.

"Dear heart!" said Dolly, pausing before she spoke again. "But what a pity it is you should work of a Sunday, and not clean yourself, — if you *did n't* go to

church; for if you 'd a roasting bit, it might be as you could n't leave it, being a lone man. But there 's the bakehus, if you could make up your mind to spend a twopence on the oven now and then, — not every week, in course — I should n't like to do that myself, — you might carry your bit o' dinner there, for it 's nothing but right to have a bit o' summat hot of a Sunday, and not to make it as you can't know your dinner from Saturday. But now, upo' Christmas Day, this blessed Christmas as is ever coming, if you was to take your dinner to the bakehus, and go to church, and see the holly and the yew, and hear the anthim, and then take the sacramen', you 'd be a deal the better, and you 'd know which end you stood on, and you could put your trust i' Them as knows better nor we do, seein' you 'd ha' done what it lies on us all to do."

Dolly's exhortation, which was an unusually long effort of speech for her, was uttered in the soothing persuasive tone with which she would have tried to prevail on a sick man to take his medicine or a basin of gruel for which he had no appetite. Silas had never before been closely urged on the point of his absence from church, which had only been thought of as a part of his general queerness; and he was too direct and simple to evade Dolly's appeal.

"Nay, nay," he said, "I know nothing o' church. I 've never been to church."

"No!" said Dolly, in a low tone of wonderment. Then bethinking herself of Silas's advent from an unknown country, she said, "Could it ha' been as they 'd no church where you was born?"

"Oh, yes," said Silas meditatively, sitting in his usual posture of leaning on his knees and supporting his head. "There was churches — a many — it was

a big town. But I knew nothing of 'em — I went to chapel."

Dolly was much puzzled at this new word, but she was rather afraid of inquiring further, lest "chapel" might mean some haunt of wickedness. After a little thought she said, —

"Well, Master Marner, it 's niver too late to turn over a new leaf, and if you 've niver had no church, there 's no telling the good it 'll do you. For I feel so set up and comfortable as niver was when I 've been and heard the prayers, and the singing to the praise and glory o' God, as Mr. Macey gives out — and Mr. Crackenthorp saying good words, and more partic'lar on Sacramen' Day; and if a bit o' trouble comes, I feel as I can put up wi' it, for I 've looked for help i' the right quarter, and gev myself up to Them as we must all give ourselves up to at the last; and if we'n done our part, it is n't to be believed as Them as are above us 'ull be worse nor we are, and come short o' Their'n."

Poor Dolly's exposition of her simple Raveloe theology fell rather unmeaningly on Silas's ears, for there was no word in it that could rouse a memory of what he had known as religion, and his comprehension was quite baffled by the plural pronoun, which was no heresy of Dolly's, but only her way of avoiding a presumptuous familiarity. He remained silent, not feeling inclined to assent to the part of Dolly's speech which he fully understood — her recommendation that he should go to church. Indeed, Silas was so unaccustomed to talk beyond the brief questions and answers necessary for the transaction of his simple business that words did not easily come to him without the urgency of a distinct purpose.

But now, little Aaron, having become used to the weaver's awful presence, had advanced to his mother's side, and Silas, seeming to notice him for the first time, tried to return Dolly's signs of good-will by offering the lad a bit of lard-cake. Aaron shrank back a little, and rubbed his head against his mother's shoulder, but still thought the piece of cake worth the risk of putting his hand out for it.

"Oh, for shame, Aaron," said his mother, taking him on her lap, however; "why, you don't want cake again yet awhile. He 's wonderful hearty," she went on, with a little sigh; "that he is, God knows. He 's my youngest, and we spoil him sadly, for either me or the father must allays hev him in our sight — that we must."

She stroked Aaron's brown head, and thought it must do Master Marner good to see such a "pictur of a child." But Marner, on the other side of the hearth, saw the neat-featured rosy face as a mere dim round, with two dark spots in it.

"And he 's got a voice like a bird — you would n't think," Dolly went on; "he can sing a Christmas carril as his father 's taught him; and I take it for a token as he 'll come to good, as he can learn the good tunes so quick. Come, Aaron, stan' up and sing the carril to Master Marner, come."

Aaron replied by rubbing his forehead against his mother's shoulder.

"Oh, that 's naughty," said Dolly gently. "Stan' up, when mother tells you, and let me hold the cake till you 've done."

Aaron was not indisposed to display his talents, even to an ogre, under protecting circumstances, and after a few more signs of coyness, consisting chiefly in

rubbing the backs of his hands over his eyes, and then peeping between them at Master Marner to see if he looked anxious for the "carril," he at length allowed his head to be duly adjusted, and standing behind the table which let him appear above it only as far as his broad frill, so that he looked like a cherubic head untroubled with a body, he began with a clear chirp and in a melody that had the rhythm of an industrious hammer, —

"God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas Day."

Dolly listened with a devout look, glancing at Marner in some confidence that this strain would help to allure him to church.

"That 's Christmas music," she said, when Aaron had ended and had secured his piece of cake again. "There 's no other music equil to the Christmas music — 'Hark the erol angils sing.' And you may judge what it is at church, Master Marner, with the bassoon and the voices, as you can't help thinking you 've got to a better place a'ready — for I would n't speak ill o' this world, seeing as Them put us in it as knows best; but what wi' the drink, and the quarrelling, and the bad illnesses, and the hard dying, as I 've seen times and times, one 's thankful to hear of a better. The boy sings pretty, don't he, Master Marner?"

"Yes," said Silas absently, "very pretty."

The Christmas carol, with its hammer-like rhythm, had fallen on his ears as strange music, quite unlike a hymn, and could have none of the effect Dolly contemplated. But he wanted to show her that he was grateful, and the only mode that occurred to him was to offer Aaron a bit more cake.

"Oh, no, thank you, Master Marner," said Dolly, holding down Aaron's willing hands. "We must be going home now. And so I wish you good-by, Master Marner; and if you ever feel anyways bad in your inside, as you can't fend for yourself, I 'll come and clean up for you, and get you a bit o' victual, and willing. But I beg and pray of you to leave off weaving of a Sunday, for it 's bad for soul and body — and the money as comes i' that way 'ull be a bad bed to lie down on at the last, if it does n't fly away, nobody knows where, like the white frost. And you 'll excuse me being that free with you, Master Marner, for I wish you well — I do. Make your bow, Aaron."

Silas said "Good-by, and thank you kindly," as he opened the door for Dolly, but he could n't help feeling relieved when she was gone — relieved that he might weave again and moan at his ease. Her simple view of life and its comforts, by which she had tried to cheer him, was only like a report of unknown objects, which his imagination could not fashion. The fountains of human love and of faith in a divine love had not yet been unlocked, and his soul was still the shrunken rivulet, with only this difference, that its little groove of sand was blocked up, and it wandered confusedly against dark obstruction.

And so, notwithstanding the honest persuasions of Mr. Macey and Dolly Winthrop, Silas spent his Christmas Day in loneliness, eating his meat in sadness of heart, though the meat had come to him as a neighborly present. In the morning he looked out on the black frost that seemed to press cruelly on every blade of grass, while the half-icy red pool shivered under the bitter wind; but towards evening the snow began to fall, and curtained from him even that dreary outlook.

shutting him close up with his narrow grief. And he sat in his robbed home through the livelong evening, not caring to close his shutters or lock his door, pressing his head between his hands and moaning, till the cold grasped him and told him that his fire was gray.

Nobody in this world but himself knew that he was the same Silas Marner who had once loved his fellow with tender love, and trusted in an unseen goodness. Even to himself that past experience had become dim.

But in Raveloe village the bells rang merrily, and the church was fuller than all through the rest of the year, with red faces among the abundant dark green boughs — faces prepared for a longer service than usual by an odorous breakfast of toast and ale. Those green boughs, the hymn and anthem never heard but at Christmas — even the Athanasian Creed, which was discriminated from the others only as being longer and of exceptional virtue, since it was only read on rare occasions — brought a vague exulting sense, for which the grown men could as little have found words as the children, that something great and mysterious had been done for them in heaven above, and in earth below, which they were appropriating by their presence. And then the red faces made their way through the black biting frost to their own homes, feeling themselves free for the rest of the day to eat, drink, and be merry, and using that Christian freedom without diffidence.

At Squire Cass's family party that day nobody mentioned Dunstan — nobody was sorry for his absence, or feared it would be too long. The doctor and his wife, uncle and aunt Kimble, were there, and the annual Christmas talk was carried through without

any omissions, rising to the climax of Mr. Kimble's experience when he walked the London hospitals thirty years back, together with striking professional anecdotes then gathered. Whereupon cards followed, with aunt Kimble's annual failure to follow suit, and uncle Kimble's irascibility concerning the odd trick which was rarely explicable to him, when it was not on his side, without a general visitation of tricks to see that they were formed on sound principles; the whole being accompanied by a strong steaming odor of spirits-and-water.

But the party on Christmas Day, being a strictly family party, was not the preëminently brilliant celebration of the season at the Red House. It was the great dance on New Year's Eve that made the glory of Squire Cass's hospitality, as of his forefathers', time out of mind. This was the occasion when all the society of Raveloe and Tarley, whether old acquaintances separated by long rutty distances, or cooled acquaintances separated by misunderstandings concerning runaway calves, or acquaintances founded on intermittent condescension, counted on meeting and on comporting themselves with mutual appropriateness. This was the occasion on which fair dames who came on pillions sent their bandboxes before them, supplied with more than their evening costume; for the feast was not to end with a single evening, like a paltry town entertainment, where the whole supply of eatables is put on the table at once and bedding is scanty. The Red House was provisioned as if for a siege; and as for the spare feather-beds ready to be laid on floors, they were as plentiful as might naturally be expected in a family that had killed its own geese for many generations.

Godfrey Cass was looking forward to this New Year's Eve with a foolish reckless longing that made him half deaf to his importunate companion, Anxiety.

"Dunsey will be coming home soon: there will be a great blow-up, and how will you bribe his spite to silence?" said Anxiety.

"Oh, he won't come home before New Year's Eve, perhaps," said Godfrey; "and I shall sit by Nancy then and dance with her, and get a kind look from her in spite of herself."

"But money is wanted in another quarter," said Anxiety, in a louder voice, "and how will you get it without selling your mother's diamond pin? And if you don't get it . . .?"

"Well, but something may happen to make things easier. At any rate, there 's one pleasure for me close at hand — Nancy is coming."

"Yes, and suppose your father should bring matters to a pass that will oblige you to decline marrying her — and to give your reasons?"

"Hold your tongue, and don't worry me. I can see Nancy's eyes, just as they will look at me, and feel her hand in mine already."

But Anxiety went on, though in noisy Christmas company, refusing to be utterly quieted even by much drinking.

CHAPTER XI.

Some women, I grant, would not appear to advantage seated on a pillion, and attired in a drab joseph and a drab beaver bonnet, with a crown resembling a small stew-pan; for a garment suggesting a coachman's greatcoat, cut out under an exiguity of cloth that

would only allow of miniature capes, is not well adapted to conceal deficiencies of contour, nor is drab a color that will throw sallow cheeks into lively contrast. It was all the greater triumph to Miss Nancy Lammeter's beauty that she looked thoroughly bewitching in that costume, as, seated on the pillion behind her tall, erect father, she held one arm round him, and looked down, with open-eyed anxiety, at the treacherous snow-covered pools and puddles, which sent up formidable splashings of mud under the stamp of Dobbin's foot. A painter would, perhaps, have preferred her in those moments when she was free from self-consciousness; but certainly the bloom on her cheeks was at its highest point of contrast with the surrounding drab when she arrived at the door of the Red House, and saw Mr. Godfrey Cass ready to lift her from the pillion. She wished her sister Priscilla had come up at the same time behind the servant, for then she would have contrived that Mr. Godfrey should have lifted off Priscilla first, and, in the mean time, she would have persuaded her father to go round to the horseblock instead of alighting at the doorsteps. It was very painful when you had made it quite clear to a young man that you were determined not to marry him, however much he might wish it, that he would still continue to pay you marked attentions; besides, why did n't he always show the same attentions if he meant them sincerely, instead of being so strange as Mr. Godfrey Cass was, sometimes behaving as if he did n't want to speak to her, and taking no notice of her for weeks and weeks, and then, all on a sudden, almost making love again? Moreover, it was quite plain he had no real love for her, else he would not let people have *that* to say of him which

they did say. Did he suppose that Miss Nancy Lammeter was to be won by any man, squire or no squire, who led a bad life? That was not what she had been used to see in her own father, who was the soberest and best man in that country-side, only a little hot and hasty now and then if things were not done to the minute.

All these thoughts rushed through Miss Nancy's mind, in their habitual succession, in the moments between her first sight of Mr. Godfrey Cass standing at the door and her own arrival there. Happily, the Squire came out too, and gave a loud greeting to her father, so that, somehow, under cover of this noise, she seemed to find concealment for her confusion and neglect of any suitably formal behavior while she was being lifted from the pillion by strong arms which seemed to find her ridiculously small and light. And there was the best reason for hastening into the house at once, since the snow was beginning to fall again, threatening an unpleasant journey for such guests as were still on the road. These were a small minority; for already the afternoon was beginning to decline, and there would not be too much time for the ladies who came from a distance to attire themselves in readiness for the early tea which was to inspirit them for the dance.

There was a buzz of voices through the house as Miss Nancy entered, mingled with the scrape of a fiddle preluding in the kitchen; but the Lammeters were guests whose arrival had evidently been thought of so much that it had been watched for from the windows, for Mrs. Kimble, who did the honors at the Red House on these great occasions, came forward to meet Miss Nancy in the hall, and conduct her upstairs

Mrs. Kimble was the Squire's sister, as well as the doctor's wife — a double dignity, with which her diameter was in direct proportion; so that a journey upstairs being rather fatiguing to her, she did not oppose Miss Nancy's request to be allowed to find her way alone to the Blue Room, where the Miss Lammeters' bandboxes had been deposited on their arrival in the morning.

There was hardly a bedroom in the house where feminine compliments were not passing and feminine toilettes going forward, in various stages, in space made scanty by extra beds spread upon the floor; and Miss Nancy, as she entered the Blue Room, had to make her little formal curtsy to a group of six. On the one hand, there were ladies no less important than the two Miss Gunns, the wine merchant's daughters from Lytherly, dressed in the height of fashion, with the tightest skirts and the shortest waists, and gazed at by Miss Ladbrook (of the Old Pastures) with a shyness not unsustained by inward criticism. Partly, Miss Ladbrook felt that her own skirt must be regarded as unduly lax by the Miss Gunns, and partly, that it was a pity the Miss Gunns did not show that judgment which she herself would show if she were in their place, by stopping a little on this side of the fashion. On the other hand, Mrs. Ladbrook was standing in skull-cap and front, with her turban in her hand, curtsying and smiling blandly and saying, "After you, ma'am" to another lady in similar circumstances, who had politely offered the precedence at the looking-glass.

But Miss Nancy had no sooner made her curtsy than an elderly lady came forward, whose full white muslin kerchief and mob-cap round her curls of smooth

gray hair were in daring contrast with the puffed yellow satins and top-knotted caps of her neighbors. She approached Miss Nancy with much primness, and said, with a slow, treble suavity, —

"Niece, I hope I see you well in health." Miss Nancy kissed her aunt's cheek dutifully, and answered, with the same sort of amiable primness, "Quite well, I thank you, aunt, and I hope I see you the same."

"Thank you, niece, I keep my health for the present. And how is my brother-in-law?"

These dutiful questions and answers were continued until it was ascertained in detail that the Lammeters were all as well as usual, and the Osgoods likewise, also that niece Priscilla must certainly arrive shortly, and that travelling on pillions in snowy weather was unpleasant, though a joseph was a great protection. Then Nancy was formally introduced to her aunt's visitors, the Miss Gunns, as being the daughters of a mother known to *their* mother, though now for the first time induced to make a journey into these parts; and these ladies were so taken by surprise at finding such a lovely face and figure in an out-of-the-way country place, that they began to feel some curiosity about the dress she would put on when she took off her joseph. Miss Nancy, whose thoughts were always conducted with the propriety and moderation conspicuous in her manners, remarked to herself that the Miss Gunns were rather hard-featured than otherwise, and that such very low dresses as they wore might have been attributed to vanity if their shoulders had been pretty, but that, being as they were, it was not reasonable to suppose that they showed their necks from a love of display, but rather from some obliga-

tion not inconsistent with sense and modesty. She felt convinced, as she opened her box, that this must be her aunt Osgood's opinion, for Miss Nancy's mind resembled her aunt's to a degree that everybody said was surprising, considering the kinship was on Mr. Osgood's side; and though you might not have supposed it from the formality of their greeting, there was a devoted attachment and mutual admiration between aunt and niece. Even Miss Nancy's refusal of her cousin Gilbert Osgood (on the ground solely that he was her cousin), though it had grieved her aunt greatly, had not in the least cooled the preference which had determined her to leave Nancy several of her hereditary ornaments, let Gilbert's future wife be whom she might.

Three of the ladies quickly retired, but the Miss Gunns were quite content that Mrs. Osgood's inclination to remain with her niece gave them also a reason for staying to see the rustic beauty's toilette. And it was really a pleasure — from the first opening of the bandbox, where everything smelt of lavender and rose leaves, to the clasping of the small coral necklace that fitted closely round her little white neck. Everything belonging to Miss Nancy was of delicate purity and nattiness: not a crease was where it had no business to be, not a bit of her linen professed whiteness without fulfilling its profession; the very pins on her pincushion were stuck in after a pattern from which she was careful to allow no aberration; and as for her own person, it gave the same idea of perfect unvarying neatness as the body of a little bird. It is true that her light brown hair was cropped behind like a boy's, and was dressed in front in a number of flat rings, that lay quite away from her face; but there was no

sort of coiffure that could make Miss Nancy's cheek and neck look otherwise than pretty; and when at last she stood complete in her silvery twilled silk, her lace tucker, her coral necklace, and coral ear-drops, the Miss Gunns could see nothing to criticise except her hands, which bore the traces of butter-making, cheese-crushing, and even still coarser work. But Miss Nancy was not ashamed of that, for while she was dressing she narrated to her aunt how she and Priscilla had packed their boxes yesterday, because this morning was baking morning, and since they were leaving home, it was desirable to make a good supply of meat-pies for the kitchen; and as she concluded this judicious remark, she turned to the Miss Gunns that she might not commit the rudeness of not including them in the conversation. The Miss Gunns smiled stiffly, and thought what a pity it was that these rich country people, who could afford to buy such good clothes (really Miss Nancy's lace and silk were very costly), should be brought up in utter ignorance and vulgarity. She actually said "mate" for "meat," "'appen" for "perhaps," and "'oss" for "horse," which, to young ladies living in good Lytherly society, who habitually said 'orse, even in domestic privacy, and only said 'appen on the right occasions, was necessarily shocking. Miss Nancy, indeed, had never been to any school higher than Dame Tedman's: her acquaintance with profane literature hardly went beyond the rhymes she had worked in her large sampler under the lamb and the shepherdess; and in order to balance an account, she was obliged to effect her subtraction by removing visible metallic shillings and sixpences from a visible metallic total. There is hardly a servant-maid in these days who is not better informed

than Miss Nancy; yet she had the essential attributes of a lady, — high veracity, delicate honor in her dealings, deference to others, and refined personal habits, — and lest these should not suffice to convince grammatical fair ones that her feelings can at all resemble theirs, I will add that she was slightly proud and exacting, and as constant in her affection towards a baseless opinion as towards an erring lover.

The anxiety about sister Priscilla, which had grown rather active by the time the coral necklace was clasped, was happily ended by the entrance of that cheerful-looking lady herself, with a face made blowsy by cold and damp. After the first questions and greetings, she turned to Nancy and surveyed her from head to foot — then wheeled her round, to ascertain that the back view was equally faultless.

"What do you think o' *these* gowns, aunt Osgood?" said Priscilla, while Nancy helped her to unrobe.

"Very handsome indeed, niece," said Mrs. Osgood, with a slight increase of formality. She always thought niece Priscilla too rough.

"I 'm obliged to have the same as Nancy, you know, for all I 'm five years older, and it makes me look yallow; for she never *will* have anything without I have mine just like it, because she wants us to look like sisters. And I tell her folks 'ull think it s my weakness makes me fancy as I shall look pretty in what she looks pretty in. For I *am* ugly — there 's no denying that: I feature my father's family. But, law! I don't mind, do you?" Priscilla here turned to the Miss Gunns, rattling on in too much preoccupation with the delight of talking to notice that her candor was not appreciated. "The pretty uns do for

fly-catchers — they keep the men off us. I've no opinion o the men, Miss Gunn — I don't know what *you* have. And as for fretting and stewing about what *they* 'll think of you from morning till night, and making your life uneasy about what they're doing when they're out o' your sight — as I tell Nancy, it 's a folly no woman need be guilty of, if she 's got a good father and a good home: let her leave it to them as have got no fortin, and can't help themselves. As I say, Mr. Have-your-own-way is the best husband, and the only one I'd ever promise to obey. I know it is n't pleasant, when you 've been used to living in a big way, and managing hogsheads and all that, to go and put your nose in by somebody else's fireside, or to sit down by yourself to a scrag or a knuckle; but, thank God! my father 's a sober man and likely to live; and if you've got a man by the chimney-corner, it does n't matter if he 's childish — the business need n't be broke up."

The delicate process of getting her narrow gown over her head without injury to her smooth curls obliged Miss Priscilla to pause in this rapid survey of life, and Mrs. Osgood seized the opportunity of rising and saying, —

"Well, niece, you 'll follow us. The Miss Gunns will like to go down."

"Sister," said Nancy, when they were alone, "you 've offended the Miss Gunns, I 'm sure."

"What have I done, child?" said Priscilla, in some alarm.

"Why, you asked them if they minded about being ugly — you 're so very blunt."

"Law, did I? Well, it popped out; it 's a mercy I said no more, for I 'm a bad un to live with folks

when they don't like the truth. But as for being ugly, look at me, child, in this silver-colored silk — I told you how it 'ud be — I look as yallow as a daffadil. Anybody 'ud say you wanted to make a mawkin of me."

"No, Priscy, don't say so. I begged and prayed of you not to let us have this silk if you 'd like another better. I was willing to have *your* choice you know I was," said Nancy, in anxious self-vindication.

"Nonsense, child! you know you 'd set your heart on this; and reason good, for you 're the color o' cream. It 'ud be fine doings for you to dress yourself to suit *my* skin. What I find fault with is that notion o' yours as I must dress myself just like you. But you do as you like with me — you always did from when first you begun to walk. If you wanted to go the field's length, the field's length you 'd go; and there was no whipping you, for you looked as prim and innicent as a daisy all the while."

"Priscy," said Nancy gently, as she fastened a coral necklace, exactly like her own, round Priscilla's neck, which was very far from being like her own, "I 'm sure I 'm willing to give way as far as is right, but who should n't dress alike if it is n't sisters? Would you have us go about looking as if we were no kin to one another — us that have got no mother and not another sister in the world? I 'd do what was right, if I dressed in a gown dyed with cheese-coloring; and I 'd rather you 'd choose, and let me wear what pleases you."

"There you go again! You 'd come round to the same thing if one talked to you from Saturday night till Saturday morning. It 'll be fine fun to see how

you 'll master your husband and never raise your voice above the singing o' the kettle all the while. I like to see the men mastered!"

"Don't talk *so*, Priscy," said Nancy, blushing "You know I don't mean ever to be married."

"Oh, you never mean a fiddlestick's end!" said Priscilla, as she arranged her discarded dress, and closed her bandbox. "Who shall *I* have to work for when father 's gone, if you are to go and take notions in your head and be an old maid, because some folks are no better than they should be? I have n't a bit o' patience with you — sitting on an addled egg forever, as if there was never a fresh un in the world. One old maid 's enough out o' two sisters; and I shall do credit to a single life, for God A'mighty meant me for it. Come, we can go down now. I 'm as ready as a mawkin *can* be — there 's nothing a-wanting to frighten the crows, now I 've got my ear-droppers in."

As the two Miss Lammeters walked into the large parlor together, any one who did not know the character of both might certainly have supposed that the reason why the square-shouldered, clumsy, high-featured Priscilla wore a dress the facsimile of her pretty sister's was either the mistaken vanity of the one, or the malicious contrivance of the other in order to set off her own rare beauty. But the good-natured self-forgetful cheeriness and common sense of Priscilla would soon have dissipated the one suspicion; and the modest calm of Nancy's speech and manners told clearly of a mind free from all disavowed devices.

Places of honor had been kept for the Miss Lammeters near the head of the principal tea-table in the wainscoted parlor, now looking fresh and pleasant with handsome branches of holly, yew, and laurel, from

the abundant growths of the old garden; and Nancy felt an inward flutter, that no firmness of purpose could prevent, when she saw Mr. Godfrey Cass advancing to lead her to a seat between himself and Mr. Crackenthorp, while Priscilla was called to the opposite side between her father and the Squire. It certainly did make some difference to Nancy that the lover she had given up was the young man of quite the highest consequence in the parish — at home in a venerable and unique parlor, which was the extremity of grandeur in her experience, a parlor where *she* might one day have been mistress, with the consciousness that she was spoken of as "Madam Cass," the Squire's wife. These circumstances exalted her inward drama in her own eyes, and deepened the emphasis with which she declared to herself that not the most dazzling rank should induce her to marry a man whose conduct showed him careless of his character, but that, "love once, love always," was the motto of a true and pure woman, and no man should ever have any right over her which would be a call on her to destroy the dried flowers that she treasured, and always would treasure, for Godfrey Cass's sake. And Nancy was capable of keeping her word to herself under very trying conditions. Nothing but a becoming blush betrayed the moving thoughts that urged themselves upon her as she accepted the seat next to Mr. Crackenthorp; for she was so instinctively neat and adroit in all her actions, and her pretty lips met each other with such quiet firmness, that it would have been difficult for her to appear agitated.

It was not the rector's practice to let a charming blush pass without an appropriate compliment. He was not in the least lofty or aristocratic, but simply a merry-eyed, small-featured, gray-haired man, with his

chin propped by an ample, many-creased white neckcloth, which seemed to predominate over every other point in his person, and somehow to impress its peculiar character on his remarks; so that to have considered his amenities apart from his cravat would have been a severe, and perhaps a dangerous, effort of abstraction.

"Ha, Miss Nancy," he said, turning his head within his cravat, and smiling down pleasantly upon her, "when anybody pretends this has been a severe winter, I shall tell them I saw the roses blooming on New Year's Eve — eh, Godfrey, what do *you* say?"

Godfrey made no reply, and avoided looking at Nancy very markedly; for though these complimentary personalities were held to be in excellent taste in old-fashioned Raveloe society, reverent love has a politeness of its own which it teaches to men otherwise of small schooling. But the Squire was rather impatient at Godfrey's showing himself a dull spark in this way. By this advanced hour of the day, the Squire was always in higher spirits than we have seen him in at the breakfast-table, and felt it quite pleasant to fulfil the hereditary duty of being noisily jovial and patronizing: the large silver snuff-box was in active service, and was offered without fail to all neighbors from time to time, however often they might have declined the favor. At present, the Squire had only given an express welcome to the heads of families as they appeared; but always as the evening deepened, his hospitality rayed out more widely, till he had tapped the youngest guests on the back and shown a peculiar fondness for their presence, in the full belief that they must feel their lives made happy by their belonging to a parish where there was such a hearty man as Squire Cass to invite

them and wish them well. Even in this early stage of the jovial mood, it was natural that he should wish to supply his son's deficiencies by looking and speaking for him.

"Ay, ay," he began, offering his snuff-box to Mr. Lammeter, who for the second time bowed his head and waved his hand in stiff rejection of the offer, "us old fellows may wish ourselves young to-night, when we see the mistletoe-bough in the White Parlor. It's true, most things are gone back'ard in these last thirty years — the country 's going down since the old king fell ill. But when I look at Miss Nancy here, I begin to think the lasses keep up their quality; — ding me if I remember a sample to match her, not when I was a fine young fellow, and thought a deal about my pigtail. No offence to you, madam," he added, bending to Mrs. Crackenthorp, who sat by him, "I did n't know *you* when you were as young as Miss Nancy here."

Mrs. Crackenthorp — a small, blinking woman, who fidgeted incessantly with her lace, ribbons, and gold chain, turning her head about and making subdued noises, very much like a guinea-pig, that twitches its nose and soliloquizes in all company indiscriminately — now blinked and fidgeted towards the Squire, and said, "Oh, no — no offence."

This emphatic compliment of the Squire's to Nancy was felt by others besides Godfrey to have a diplomatic significance; and her father gave a slight additional erectness to his back as he looked across the table at her with complacent gravity. That grave and orderly senior was not going to bate a jot of his dignity by seeming elated at the notion of a match between his family and the Squire's: he was gratified by any honor paid to his daughter; but he must see an altera-

tion in several ways before his consent would be vouchsafed. His spare but healthy person, and high-featured firm face, that looked as if it had never been flushed by excess, was in strong contrast, not only with the Squire's, but with the appearance of the Raveloe farmers generally — in accordance with a favorite saying of his own, that "breed was stronger than pasture."

"Miss Nancy 's wonderful like what her mother was, though; is n't she, Kimble?" said the stout lady of that name, looking round for her husband.

But Doctor Kimble (country apothecaries in old days enjoyed that title without authority of diploma), being a thin and agile man, was flitting about the room with his hands in his pockets, making himself agreeable to his feminine patients, with medical impartiality, and being welcomed everywhere as a doctor by hereditary right — not one of those miserable apothecaries who canvass for practice in strange neighborhoods, and spend all their income in starving their one horse, but a man of substance, able to keep an extravagant table like the best of his patients. Time out of mind the Raveloe doctor had been a Kimble; Kimble was inherently a doctor's name; and it was difficult to contemplate firmly the melancholy fact that the actual Kimble had no son, so that his practice might one day be handed over to a successor, with the incongruous name of Taylor or Johnson. But in that case the wiser people in Raveloe would employ Dr. Blick, of Flitton — as less unnatural.

"Did you speak to me, my dear?" said the authentic doctor, coming quickly to his wife's side; but, as if foreseeing that she would be too much out of breath to repeat her remark, he went on immediately — "Ha,

Miss Priscilla, the sight of you revives the taste of that super-excellent pork-pie. I hope the batch is n't near an end."

"Yes, indeed, it is, doctor," said Priscilla; "but I 'll answer for it the next shall be as good. My pork-pies don't turn out well by chance."

"Not as your doctoring does, eh, Kimble? — because folks forget to take your physic, eh?" said the Squire, who regarded physic and doctors as many loyal churchmen regard the church and the clergy — tasting a joke against them when he was in health, but impatiently eager for their aid when anything was the matter with him. He tapped his box, and looked round with a triumphant laugh.

"Ah, she has a quick wit, my friend Priscilla has," said the doctor, choosing to attribute the epigram to a lady rather than allow a brother-in-law that advantage over him. "She saves a little pepper to sprinkle over her talk — that 's the reason why she never puts too much into her pies. There 's my wife now, she never has an answer at her tongue's end; but if I offend her, she 's sure to scarify my throat with black pepper the next day, or else give me the colic with watery greens. That 's an awful tit-for-tat." Here the vivacious doctor made a pathetic grimace.

"Did you ever hear the like?" said Mrs. Kimble, laughing above her double chin with much good-humor, aside to Mrs. Crackenthrop, who blinked and nodded, and amiably intended to smile, but the intention lost itself in small twitchings and noises.

"I suppose that 's the sort of tit-for-tat adopted in your profession, Kimble, if you 've a grudge against a patient," said the rector.

"Never do have a grudge against our patients,"

said Mr. Kimble, "except when they leave us; and then, you see, we have n't the chance of prescribing for 'em. Ha, Miss Nancy," he continued, suddenly skipping to Nancy's side, "you won't forget your promise? You 're to save a dance for me, you know."

"Come, come, Kimble, don't you be too for'ard," said the Squire. "Give the young uns fair play. There 's my son Godfrey 'll be wanting to have a round with you if you run off with Miss Nancy. He 's bespoke her for the first dance, I 'll be bound. Eh, sir! what do you say?" he continued, throwing himself backward, and looking at Godfrey. "Have n't you asked Miss Nancy to open the dance with you?"

Godfrey, sorely uncomfortable under this significant insistence about Nancy, and afraid to think where it would end by the time his father had set his usual hospitable example of drinking before and after supper, saw no course open but to turn to Nancy and say, with as little awkwardness as possible, —

"No, I 've not asked her yet, but I hope she 'll consent — if somebody else has n't been before me."

"No, I 've not engaged myself," said Nancy quietly, though blushingly. (If Mr. Godfrey founded any hopes on her consenting to dance with him he would soon be undeceived, but there was no need for her to be uncivil.)

"Then I hope you 've no objections to dancing with me," said Godfrey, beginning to lose the sense that there was anything uncomfortable in this arrangement.

"No, no objections," said Nancy, in a cold tone.

"Ah, well, you 're a lucky fellow, Godfrey," said uncle Kimble; "but you 're my godson, so I won't stand in your way. Else I 'm not so very old, eh, my dear?"

he went on, skipping to his wife's side again. "You would n't mind my having a second after you were gone, — not if I cried a good deal first?"

"Come, come, take a cup o' tea and stop your tongue, do," said good-humored Mrs. Kimble, feeling some pride in a husband who must be regarded as so clever and amusing by the company generally. If he had only not been irritable at cards!

While safe, well-tested personalities were enlivening the tea in this way, the sound of the fiddle approaching within a distance at which it could be heard distinctly made the young people look at each other with sympathetic impatience for the end of the meal.

"Why, there 's Solomon in the hall," said the Squire, "and playing my fav'rite tune, *I* believe — 'The flaxen-headed ploughboy' — he 's for giving us a hint as we are n't enough in a hurry to hear him play. Bob," he called out to his third long-legged son, who was at the other end of the room, "open the door, and tell Solomon to come in. He shall give us a tune here."

Bob obeyed, and Solomon walked in, fiddling as he walked, for he would on no account break off in the middle of a tune.

"Here, Solomon," said the Squire, with loud patronage. "Round here, my man. Ah, I knew it was 'The flaxen-headed ploughboy:' there 's no finer tune."

Solomon Macey, a small, hale old man with an abundant crop of long white hair reaching nearly to his shoulders, advanced to the indicated spot, bowing reverently while he fiddled, as much as to say that he respected the company, though he respected the key-note more. As soon as he had repeated the tune and lowered his fiddle, he bowed again to the Squire and

the rector, and said, "I hope I see your honor and your reverence well, and wishing you health and long life and a happy New Year. And wishing the same to you, Mr. Lammeter, sir; and to the other gentlemen, and the madams, and the young lasses."

As Solomon uttered the last words, he bowed in all directions solicitously, lest he should be wanting in due respect. But thereupon he immediately began to prelude, and fell into the tune which he knew would be taken as a special compliment by Mr. Lammeter.

"Thank ye, Solomon, thank ye," said Mr. Lammeter, when the fiddle paused again. "That 's 'Over the hills and far away,' that is. My father used to say to me whenever we heard that tune, 'Ah, lad, *I* come from over the hills and far away.' There 's a many tunes I don't make head or tail of; but that speaks to me like the blackbird's whistle. I suppose it 's the name; there 's a deal in the name of a tune."

But Solomon was already impatient to prelude again, and presently broke with much spirit into "Sir Roger de Coverley," at which there was a sound of chairs pushed back, and laughing voices.

"Ay, ay, Solomon, we know what that means," said the Squire, rising. "It 's time to begin the dance, eh? Lead the way, then, and we 'll all follow you."

So Solomon, holding his white head on one side, and playing vigorously, marched forward at the head of the gay procession into the White Parlor, where the mistletoe-bough was hung, and multitudinous tallow candles made rather a brilliant effect, gleaming from among the berried holly-boughs, and reflected in the old-fashioned oval mirrors fastened in the panels of the white wainscot. A quaint procession! Old Solomon, in his seedy clothes and long white locks, seemed to

be luring that decent company by the magic scream of his fiddle — luring discreet matrons in turban-shaped caps, nay, Mrs. Crackenthorp herself, the summit of whose perpendicular feather was on a level with the Squire's shoulder — luring fair lasses complacently conscious of very short waists and skirts blameless of front-folds — luring burly fathers, in large variegated waistcoats, and ruddy sons, for the most part shy and sheepish, in short nether garments and very long coat-tails.

Already, Mr. Macey and a few other privileged villagers, who were allowed to be spectators on these great occasions, were seated on benches placed for them near the door; and great was the admiration and satisfaction in that quarter when the couples had formed themselves for the dance, and the Squire led off with Mrs. Crackenthorp, joining hands with the rector and Mrs. Osgood. That was as it should be — that was what everybody had been used to — and the charter of Raveloe seemed to be renewed by the ceremony. It was not thought of as an unbecoming levity for the old and middle-aged people to dance a little before sitting down to cards, but rather as part of their social duties. For what were these if not to be merry at appropriate times, interchanging visits and poultry with due frequency, paying each other old-established compliments in sound traditional phrases, passing well-tried personal jokes, urging your guests to eat and drink too much out of hospitality, and eating and drinking too much in your neighbor's house to show that you liked your cheer? And the parson naturally set an example in these social duties. For it would not have been possible for the Raveloe mind, without a peculiar revelation, to know that a clergyman should

be a pale-faced memento of solemnities, instead of a reasonably faulty man, whose exclusive authority to read prayers and preach, to christen, marry, and bury you, necessarily co-existed with the right to sell you the ground to be buried in, and to take tithe in kind; on which last point, of course, there was a little grumbling, but not to the extent of irreligion — not of deeper significance than the grumbling at the rain, which was by no means accompanied with a spirit of impious defiance, but with a desire that the prayer for fine weather might be read forthwith.

There was no reason, then, why the rector's dancing should not be received as part of the fitness of things quite as much as the Squire's, or why, on the other hand, Mr. Macey's official respect should restrain him from subjecting the parson's performance to that criticism with which minds of extraordinary acuteness must necessarily contemplate the doings of their fallible fellow-men.

"The Squire 's pretty springe, considering his weight," said Mr. Macey, "and he stamps uncommon well. But Mr. Lammeter beats 'em all for shapes: you see, he holds his head like a sodger, and he is n't so cushiony as most o' the oldish gentlefolks — they run fat in general; and he 's got a fine leg. The parson 's nimble enough, but he has n't got much of a leg: it 's a bit too thick down'ard, and his knees might be a bit nearer wi'out damage; but he might do worse, he might do worse. Though he has n't that grand way o' waving his hand as the Squire has."

"Talk o' nimbleness, look at Mrs. Osgood," said Ben Winthrop, who was holding his son Aaron between his knees. "She trips along with her little steps, so as nobody can see how she goes — it 's like

as if she had little wheels to her feet. She does n't look a day older nor last year: she 's the finest-made woman as is, let the next be where she will."

"I don't heed how the women are made," said Mr. Macey, with some contempt. "They wear nayther coat nor breeches; you can't make much out o' their shapes."

"Fayder," said Aaron, whose feet were busy beating out the tune, "how does that big cock's-feather stick in Mrs. Crackenthorp's yead? Is there a little hole for it, like in my shuttlecock?"

"Hush, lad, hush; that 's the way the ladies dress theirselves, that is," said the father; adding, however, in an undertone to Mr. Macey: "It does make her look funny, though — partly like a short-necked bottle wi' a long quill in it. Hey, by jingo, there 's the young Squire leading off now, wi' Miss Nancy for partners. There 's a lass for you! — like a pink-and-white posy — there 's nobody 'ud think as anybody could be so pritty. I should n't wonder if she 's Madam Cass some day, arter all — and nobody more rightfuller, for they 'd make a fine match. You can find nothing against Master Godfrey's shapes, Macey, *I*'ll bet a penny."

Mr. Macey screwed up his mouth, leaned his head further on one side, and twirled his thumbs with a presto movement as his eyes followed Godfrey up the dance. At last he summed up his opinion.

"Pretty well down'ard, but a bit too round i' the shoulder-blades. Ard as for them coats as he gets from the Flitton tailor, they 're a poor cut to pay double money for."

"Ah, Mr. Macey, you and me are two folks," said Ben, slightly indignant at this carping. "When I 've

got a pot o' good ale, I like to swaller it, and do my inside good, i'stead o' smelling and staring at it to see if I can't find faut wi' the brewing. I should like you to pick me out a finer-limbed young fellow nor Master Godfrey — one as 'ud knock you down easier, or 's more pleasanter-looksed when he 's piert and merry."

"Tchuh!" said Mr. Macey, provoked to increased severity, "he is n't come to his right color yet: he 's partly like a slack-baked pie. And I doubt he 's got a soft place in his head, else why should he be turned round the finger by that offal Dunsey as nobody 's seen o' late, and let him kill that fine hunting hoss as was the talk o' the country? And one while he was allays after Miss Nancy, and then it all went off again, like a smell o' hot porridge, as I may say. That was n't my way when *I* went a-coorting."

"Ah, but mayhap Miss Nancy hung off, like, and your lass did n't," said Ben.

"I should say she did n't," said Mr. Macey, significantly. "Before I said 'sniff,' I took care to know as she 'd say 'snaff,' and pretty quick, too. I was n't a-going to open *my* mouth, like a dog at a fly, and snap it to again, wi' nothing to swaller."

"Well, I think Miss Nancy 's a-coming round again," said Ben, "for Master Godfrey does n't look so down-hearted to-night. And I see he 's for taking her away to sit down, now they 're at the end o' the dance: that looks like sweet-hearting, that does."

The reason why Godfrey and Nancy had left the dance was not so tender as Ben imagined. In the close press of couples a slight accident had happened to Nancy's dress, which, while it was short enough to show her neat ankle in front, was long enough behind to be caught under the stately stamp of the Squire's

foot, so as to rend certain stitches at the waist, and cause much sisterly agitation in Priscilla's mind, as well as serious concern in Nancy's. One's thoughts may be much occupied with love-struggles, but hardly so as to be insensible to a disorder in the general framework of things. Nancy had no sooner completed her duty in the figure they were dancing than she said to Godfrey, with a deep blush, that she must go and sit down till Priscilla could come to her; for the sisters had already exchanged a short whisper and an open-eyed glance full of meaning. No reason less urgent than this could have prevailed on Nancy to give Godfrey this opportunity of sitting apart with her. As for Godfrey, he was feeling so happy and oblivious under the long charm of the country-dance with Nancy, that he got rather bold on the strength of her confusion, and was capable of leading her straight away, without leave asked, into the adjoining small parlor, where the card-tables were set.

"Oh, no, thank you," said Nancy coldly, as soon as she perceived where he was going, "not in there. I 'll wait here till Priscilla 's ready to come to me. I 'm sorry to bring you out of the dance and make myself troublesome."

"Why, you 'll be more comfortable here by yourself," said the artful Godfrey; "I 'll leave you here till your sister can come." He spoke in an indifferent tone.

That was an agreeable proposition, and just what Nancy desired; why, then, was she a little hurt that Mr. Godfrey should make it? They entered, and she seated herself on a chair against one of the card-tables, as the stiffest and most unapproachable position she could choose

"Thank you, sir," she said immediately. "I need n't give you any more trouble. I 'm sorry you 've had such an unlucky partner."

"That 's very ill-natured of you," said Godfrey, standing by her without any sign of intended departure, "to be sorry you 've danced with me."

"Oh, no, sir, I don't mean to say what 's ill-natured at all," said Nancy, looking distractingly prim and pretty. "When gentlemen have so many pleasures, one dance can matter but very little."

"You know that is n't true. You know one dance with you matters more to me than all the other pleasures in the world."

It was a long, long while since Godfrey had said anything so direct as that, and Nancy was startled. But her instinctive dignity and repugnance to any show of emotion made her sit perfectly still, and only throw a little more decision into her voice as she said, —

"No, indeed, Mr. Godfrey, that 's not known to me, and I have very good reasons for thinking different. But if it 's true, I don't wish to hear it."

"Would you never forgive me, then, Nancy — never think well of me, let what would happen — would you never think the present made amends for the past? Not if I turned a good fellow, and gave up everything you did n't like?"

Godfrey was half conscious that this sudden opportunity of speaking to Nancy alone had driven him beside himself; but blind feeling had got the mastery of his tongue. Nancy really felt much agitated by the possibility Godfrey's words suggested, but this very pressure of emotion that she was in danger of finding too strong for her roused all her power of self-command.

"I should be glad to see a good change in anybody, Mr. Godfrey," she answered, with the slightest discernible difference of tone, "but it 'ud be better if no change was wanted."

"You 're very hard-hearted, Nancy," said Godfrey pettishly. "You might encourage me to be a better fellow. I 'm very miserable — but you 've no feeling."

"I think those have the least feeling that act wrong to begin with," said Nancy, sending out a flash in spite of herself. Godfrey was delighted with that little flash, and would have liked to go on and make her quarrel with him; Nancy was so exasperatingly quiet and firm. But she was not indifferent to him *yet.*

The entrance of Priscilla, bustling forward and saying, "Dear heart alive, child, let us look at this gown," cut off Godfrey's hopes of a quarrel.

"I suppose I must go now," he said to Priscilla.

"It 's no matter to me whether you go or stay," said that frank lady, searching for something in her pocket, with a preoccupied brow.

"Do *you* want me to go?" said Godfrey, looking at Nancy, who was now standing up by Priscilla's order.

"As you like," said Nancy, trying to recover all her former coldness, and looking down carefully at the hem of her gown.

"Then I like to stay," said Godfrey, with a reckless determination to get as much of this joy as he could to-night, and think nothing of the morrow.

CHAPTER XII.

WHILE Godfrey Cass was taking draughts of forgetfulness from the sweet presence of Nancy, willingly losing all sense of that hidden bond which at other moments galled and fretted him so as to mingle irritation with the very sunshine, Godfrey's wife was walking with slow uncertain steps through the snow-covered Raveloe lanes, carrying her child in her arms.

This journey on New Year's Eve was a premeditated act of vengeance which she had kept in her heart ever since Godfrey, in a fit of passion, had told her he would sooner die than acknowledge her as his wife. There would be a great party at the Red House on New Year's Eve, she knew: her husband would be smiling and smiled upon, hiding *her* existence in the darkest corner of his heart. But she would mar his pleasure: she would go in her dingy rags, with her faded face, once as handsome as the best, with her little child that had its father's hair and eyes, and disclose herself to the Squire as his eldest son's wife. It is seldom that the miserable can help regarding their misery as a wrong inflicted by those who are less miserable. Molly knew that the cause of her dingy rags was not her husband's neglect, but the demon Opium to whom she was enslaved, body and soul, except in the lingering mother's tenderness that refused to give him her hungry child. She knew this well; and yet, in the moments of wretched unbenumbed consciousness, the sense of her want and degradation transformed itself continually into bitterness towards Godfrey. *He* was well off; and if she had her rights she would be well off, too. The belief that

he repented his marriage, and suffered from it, only aggravated her vindictiveness. Just and self-reproving thoughts do not come to us too thickly, even in the purest air, and with the best lessons of heaven and earth; how should those white-winged delicate messengers make their way to Molly's poisoned chamber, inhabited by no higher memories than those of a barmaid's paradise of pink ribbons and gentlemen's jokes?

She had set out at an early hour, but had lingered on the road, inclined by her indolence to believe that if she waited under a warm shed the snow would cease to fall. She had waited longer than she knew, and now that she found herself belated in the snow-hidden ruggedness of the long lanes, even the animation of a vindictive purpose could not keep her spirit from failing. It was seven o'clock, and by this time she was not very far from Raveloe, but she was not familiar enough with those monotonous lanes to know how near she was to her journey's end. She needed comfort, and she knew but one comforter — the familiar demon in her bosom; but she hesitated a moment, after drawing out the black remnant, before she raised it to her lips. In that moment the mother's love pleaded for painful consciousness rather than oblivion — pleaded to be left in aching weariness, rather than to have the encircling arms benumbed so that they could not feel the dear burden. In another moment Molly had flung something away, but it was not the black remnant — it was an empty phial. And she walked on again under the breaking cloud, from which there came now and then the light of a quickly veiled star, for a freezing wind had sprung up since the snowing had ceased. But she walked always more and more drowsily, and

clutched more and more automatically the sleeping child at her bosom.

Slowly the demon was working his will, and cold and weariness were his helpers. Soon she felt nothing but a supreme immediate longing that curtained off all futurity — the longing to lie down and sleep. She had arrived at a spot where her footsteps were no longer checked by a hedgerow, and she had wandered vaguely, unable to distinguish any objects, notwithstanding the wide whiteness around her, and the growing starlight. She sank down against a straggling furze bush, an easy pillow enough; and the bed of snow, too, was soft. She did not feel that the bed was cold, and did not heed whether the child would wake and cry for her. But her arms had not yet relaxed their instinctive clutch; and the little one slumbered on as gently as if it had been rocked in a lace-trimmed cradle.

But the complete torpor came at last: the fingers lost their tension, the arms unbent; then the little head fell away from the bosom, and the blue eyes opened wide on the cold starlight. At first there was a little peevish cry of "mammy," and an effort to regain the pillowing arm and bosom; but mammy's ear was deaf, and the pillow seemed to be slipping away backward. Suddenly, as the child rolled downward on its mother's knees, all wet with snow, its eyes were caught by a bright glancing light on the white ground, and, with the ready transition of infancy, it was immediately absorbed in watching the bright living thing running towards it, yet never arriving. That bright living thing must be caught; and in an instant the child had slipped on all fours, and held out one little hand to catch the gleam. But the gleam would not be

caught in that way, and now the head was held up to see where the cunning gleam came from. It came from a very bright place; and the little one, rising on its legs, toddled through the snow, the old grimy shawl in which it was wrapped trailing behind it, and the queer little bonnet dangling at its back — toddled on to the open door of Silas Marner's cottage, and right up to the warm hearth, where there was a bright fire of logs and sticks, which had thoroughly warmed the old sack (Silas's greatcoat) spread out on the bricks to dry. The little one, accustomed to be left to itself for long hours without notice from its mother, squatted down on the sack, and spread its tiny hands towards the blaze, in perfect contentment, gurgling and making many inarticulate communications to the cheerful fire, like a new-hatched gosling beginning to find itself comfortable. But presently the warmth had a lulling effect, and the little golden head sank down on the old sack, and the blue eyes were veiled by their delicate, half-transparent lids.

But where was Silas Marner while this strange visitor had come to his hearth? He was in the cottage, but he did not see the child. During the last few weeks, since he had lost his money, he had contracted the habit of opening his door and looking out from time to time, as if he thought that his money might be somehow coming back to him, or that some trace, some news of it, might be mysteriously on the road, and be caught by the listening ear or the straining eye. It was chiefly at night, when he was not occupied in his loom, that he fell into this repetition of an act for which he could have assigned no definite purpose, and which can hardly be understood except by those who have undergone a bewildering separation

from a supremely loved object. In the evening twilight, and later whenever the night was not dark, Silas looked out on that narrow prospect round the Stone-pits, listening and gazing, not with hope, but with mere yearning and unrest.

This morning he had been told by some of his neighbors that it was New Year's Eve, and that he must sit up and hear the old year rung out and the new rung in, because that was good luck, and might bring his money back again. This was only a friendly Raveloe-way of jesting with the half-crazy oddities of a miser, but it had perhaps helped to throw Silas into a more than usually excited state. Since the on-coming of twilight he had opened his door again and again, though only to shut it immediately at seeing all distance veiled by the falling snow. But the last time he opened it the snow had ceased, and the clouds were parting here and there. He stood and listened, and gazed for a long while — there was really something on the road coming towards him then, but he caught no sign of it; and the stillness and the wide trackless snow seemed to narrow his solitude, and touched his yearning with the chill of despair. He went in again, and put his right hand on the latch of the door to close it — but he did not close it: he was arrested, as he had been already since his loss, by the invisible wand of catalepsy, and stood like a graven image, with wide but sightless eyes, holding open his door, powerless to resist either the good or evil that might enter there.

When Marner's sensibility returned, he continued the action which had been arrested, and closed his door, unaware of the chasm in his consciousness, unaware of any intermediate change, except that the light

had grown dim, and that he was chilled and faint. He thought he had been too long standing at the door and looking out. Turning towards the hearth where the two logs had fallen apart, and sent forth only a red uncertain glimmer, he seated himself on his fireside chair, and was stooping to push his logs together, when, to his blurred vision, it seemed as if there were gold on the floor in front of the hearth. Gold! — his own gold — brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away! He felt his heart begin to beat violently, and for a few moments he was unable to stretch out his hand and grasp the restored treasure. The heap of gold seemed to glow and get larger beneath his agitated gaze. He leaned forward at last, and stretched forth his hand; but instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting outline, his fingers encountered soft warm curls. In utter amazement, Silas fell on his knees and bent his head low to examine the marvel: it was a sleeping child — a round, fair thing, with soft yellow rings all over its head. Could this be his little sister come back to him in a dream — his little sister whom he had carried about in his arms for a year before she died, when he was a small boy without shoes or stockings? That was the first thought that darted across Silas's blank wonderment. *Was* it a dream? He rose to his feet again, pushed his logs together, and, throwing on some dried leaves and sticks, raised a flame; but the flame did not disperse the vision — it only lit up more distinctly the little round form of the child and its shabby clothing. It was very much like his little sister. Silas sank into his chair powerless, under the double presence of an inexplicable surprise and a hurrying influx of memories. How and when had the child come in without

his knowledge? He had never been beyond the door. But along with that question, and almost thrusting it away, there was a vision of the old home and the old streets leading to Lantern Yard — and within that vision another, of the thoughts which had been present with him in those far-off scenes. The thoughts were strange to him now, like old friendships impossible to revive; and yet he had a dreamy feeling that this child was somehow a message come to him from that far-off life: it stirred fibres that had never been moved in Raveloe — old quiverings of tenderness — old impressions of awe at the presentiment of some Power presiding over his life; for his imagination had not yet extricated itself from the sense of mystery in the child's sudden presence, and had formed no conjectures of ordinary natural means by which the event could have been brought about.

But there was a cry on the hearth: the child had awaked, and Marner stooped to lift it on his knee. It clung round his neck, and burst louder and louder into that mingling of inarticulate cries with "mammy" by which little children express the bewilderment of waking. Silas pressed it to him, and almost unconsciously uttered sounds of hushing tenderness, while he bethought himself that some of his porridge, which had got cool by the dying fire, would do to feed the child with if it were only warmed up a little.

He had plenty to do through the next hour. The porridge, sweetened with some dry brown sugar from an old store which he had refrained from using for himself, stopped the cries of the little one, and made her lift her blue eyes with a wide quiet gaze at Silas, as he put the spoon into her mouth. Presently she slipped from his knee and began to toddle about, but

with a pretty stagger that made Silas jump up and follow her lest she should fall against anything that would hurt her. But she only fell in a sitting posture on the ground, and began to pull at her boots, looking up at him with a crying face as if the boots hurt her. He took her on his knee again, but it was some time before it occurred to Silas's dull bachelor mind that the wet boots were the grievance, pressing on her warm ankles. He got them off with difficulty, and baby was at once happily occupied with the primary mystery of her own toes, inviting Silas, with much chuckling, to consider the mystery too. But the wet boots had at last suggested to Silas that the child had been walking on the snow, and this roused him from his entire oblivion of any ordinary means by which it could have entered or been brought into his house. Under the prompting of this new idea, and without waiting to form conjectures, he raised the child in his arms, and went to the door. As soon as he had opened it, there was the cry of "mammy" again, which Silas had not heard since the child's first hungry waking. Bending forward, he could just discern the marks made by the little feet on the virgin snow, and he followed their track to the furze bushes. "Mammy!" the little one cried again and again, stretching itself forward so as almost to escape from Silas's arms, before he himself was aware that there was something more than the bush before him — that there was a human body, with the head sunk low in the furze, and half covered with the shaken snow.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was after the early supper-time at the Red House, and the entertainment was in that stage when bashfulness itself had passed into easy jollity, when gentlemen, conscious of unusual accomplishments, could at length be prevailed on to dance a hornpipe, and when the Squire preferred talking loudly, scattering snuff, and patting his visitors' backs, to sitting longer at the whist-table — a choice exasperating to uncle Kimble, who, being always volatile in sober business hours, became intense and bitter over cards and brandy, shuffled before his adversary's deal with a glare of suspicion, and turned up a mean trump-card with an air of inexpressible disgust, as if in a world where such things could happen one might as well enter on a course of reckless profligacy. When the evening had advanced to this pitch of freedom and enjoyment, it was usual for the servants, the heavy duties of supper being well over, to get their share of amusement by coming to look on at the dancing; so that the back regions of the house were left in solitude.

There were two doors by which the White Parlor was entered from the hall, and they were both standing open for the sake of air; but the lower one was crowded with the servants and villagers, and only the upper doorway was left free. Bob Cass was figuring in a hornpipe, and his father, very proud of this lithe son, whom he repeatedly declared to be just like himself in his young days in a tone that implied this to be the very highest stamp of juvenile merit, was the centre of a group who had placed themselves opposite the performer, not far from the upper door. Godfrey

was standing a little way off, not to admire his brother's dancing, but to keep sight of Nancy, who was seated in the group, near her father. He stood aloof, because he wished to avoid suggesting himself as a subject for the Squire's fatherly jokes in connection with matrimony and Miss Nancy Lammeter's beauty, which were likely to become more and more explicit. But he had the prospect of dancing with her again when the hornpipe was concluded, and in the meanwhile it was very pleasant to get long glances at her quite unobserved.

But when Godfrey was lifting his eyes from one of those long glances they encountered an object as startling to him at that moment as if it had been an apparition from the dead. It *was* an apparition from that hidden life which lies, like a dark by-street, behind the goodly ornamented façade that meets the sunlight and the gaze of respectable admirers. It was his own child, carried in Silas Marner's arms. That was his instantaneous impression, unaccompanied by doubt, though he had not seen the child for months past; and when the hope was rising that he might possibly be mistaken, Mr. Crackenthorp and Mr. Lammeter had already advanced to Silas in astonishment at this strange advent. Godfrey joined them immediately, unable to rest without hearing every word — trying to control himself, but conscious that if any one noticed him, they must see that he was white-lipped and trembling.

But now all eyes at that end of the room were bent on Silas Marner; the Squire himself had risen, and asked angrily, "How's this? — what's this? — what do you do coming in here in this way?"

"I 'm come for the doctor — I want the doctor,"

Silas had said, in the first moment, to Mr. Crackenthorp.

"Why, what 's the matter, Marner?" said the rector. "The doctor 's here; but say quietly what you want him for."

"It 's a woman," said Silas, speaking low, and half breathlessly, just as Godfrey came up. "She 's dead, I think — dead in the snow at the Stone-pits — not far from my door."

Godfrey felt a great throb: there was one terror in his mind at that moment: it was, that the woman might *not* be dead. That was an evil terror — an ugly inmate to have found a nestling-place in Godfrey's kindly disposition; but no disposition is a security from evil wishes to a man whose happiness hangs on duplicity.

"Hush, hush!" said Mr. Crackenthorp. "Go out into the hall there. I'll fetch the doctor to you. Found a woman in the snow — and thinks she 's dead," he added, speaking low to the Squire. "Better say as little about it as possible: it will shock the ladies. Just tell them a poor woman is ill from cold and hunger. I'll go and fetch Kimble."

By this time, however, the ladies had pressed forward, curious to know what could have brought the solitary linen-weaver there under such strange circumstances, and interested in the pretty child, who, half alarmed and half attracted by the brightness and the numerous company, now frowned and hid her face, now lifted up her head again and looked round placably, until a touch or a coaxing word brought back the frown, and made her bury her face with new determination.

"What child is it?" said several ladies at once.

and, among the rest, Nancy Lammeter, addressing Godfrey.

"I don't know — some poor woman's who has been found in the snow, I believe," was the answer Godfrey wrung from himself with a terrible effort. ("After all, *am* I certain?" he hastened to add, in anticipation of his own conscience.)

"Why, you 'd better leave the child here, then, Master Marner," said good-natured Mrs. Kimble, hesitating, however, to take those dingy clothes into contact with her own ornamented satin bodice. "I 'll tell one o' the girls to fetch it."

"No — no — I can't part with it, I can't let it go," said Silas abruptly. "It 's come to me — I 've a right to keep it."

The proposition to take the child from him had come to Silas quite unexpectedly, and his speech, uttered under a strong sudden impulse, was almost like a revelation to himself: a minute before he had no distinct intention about the child.

"Did you ever hear the like?" said Mrs. Kimble, in mild surprise, to her neighbor.

"Now, ladies, I must trouble you to stand aside," said Mr. Kimble, coming from the card-room, in some bitterness at the interruption, but drilled by the long habit of his profession into obedience to unpleasant calls, even when he was hardly sober.

"It's a nasty business turning out now, eh, Kimble?" said the Squire. "He might ha' gone for your young fellow, — the 'prentice, there, — what 's his name?"

"Might? ay, — what 's the use of talking about might?" growled uncle Kimble, hastening out with Marner, and followed by Mr. Crackenthorp and God-

frey. "Get me a pair of thick boots, Godfrey, will you? And stay, let somebody run to Winthrop's and fetch Dolly, — she 's the best woman to get. Ben was here himself before supper; is he gone?"

"Yes, sir, I met him," said Marner; "but I could n't stop to tell him anything, only I said I was going for the doctor, and he said the doctor was at the Squire's. And I made haste and ran, and there was nobody to be seen at the back o' the house, and so I went in to where the company was."

The child, no longer distracted by the bright light and the smiling women's faces, began to cry and call for "mammy," though always clinging to Marner, who had apparently won her thorough confidence. Godfrey had come back with the boots, and felt the cry as if some fibre were drawn tight within him.

"I 'll go," he said hastily, eager for some movement; "I 'll go and fetch the woman, — Mrs. Winthrop."

"Oh, pooh, — send somebody else," said uncle Kimble, hurrying away with Marner.

"You 'll let me know if I can be of any use, Kimble," said Mr. Crackenthorp. But the doctor was out of hearing.

Godfrey, too, had disappeared: he was gone to snatch his hat and coat, having just reflection enough to remember that he must not look like a madman; but he rushed out of the house into the snow without heeding his thin shoes.

In a few minutes he was on his rapid way to the Stone-pits by the side of Dolly, who, though feeling that she was entirely in her place in encountering cold and snow on an errand of mercy, was much concerned at a young gentleman's getting his feet wet under a like impulse.

"You 'd a deal better go back, sir," said Dolly, with respectful compassion. "You 've no call to catch cold; and I 'd ask you if you 'd be so good as tell my husband to come, on your way back — he 's at the Rainbow, I doubt — if you found him any way sober enough to be o' use. Or else, there 's Mrs. Snell 'ud happen send the boy up to fetch and carry, for there may be things wanted from the doctor's."

"No, I 'll stay, now I 'm once out — I 'll stay outside here," said Godfrey, when they came opposite Marner's cottage. "You can come and tell me if I can do anything."

"Well, sir, you 're very good: you 've a tender heart," said Dolly, going to the door.

Godfrey was too painfully preoccupied to feel a twinge of self-reproach at this undeserved praise. He walked up and down, unconscious that he was plunging ankle-deep in snow, unconscious of everything but trembling suspense about what was going on in the cottage, and the effect of each alternative on his future lot. No, not quite unconscious of everything else. Deeper down, and half smothered by passionate desire and dread, there was the sense that he ought not to be waiting on these alternatives; that he ought to accept the consequences of his deeds, own the miserable wife, and fulfil the claims of the helpless child. But he had not moral courage enough to contemplate that active renunciation of Nancy as possible for him: he had only conscience and heart enough to make him forever uneasy under the weakness that forbade the renunciation. And at this moment his mind leaped away from all restraint toward the sudden prospect of deliverance from his long bondage.

"Is she dead?" said the voice that predominated

over every other within him. "If she is, I may marry Nancy; and then I shall be a good fellow in future, and have no secrets, and the child — shall be taken care of somehow." But across that vision came the other possibility — "She may live, and then it 's all up with me."

Godfrey never knew how long it was before the door of the cottage opened and Mr. Kimble came out. He went forward to meet his uncle, prepared to suppress the agitation he must feel, whatever news he was to hear.

"I waited for you, as I 'd come so far," he said, speaking first.

"Pooh, it was nonsense for you to come out. Why did n't you send one of the men? There 's nothing to be done. She 's dead — has been dead for hours, I should say."

"What sort of woman is she?" said Godfrey, feeling the blood rush to his face.

"A young woman, but emaciated, with long black hair. Some vagrant — quite in rags. She 's got a wedding-ring on, however. They must fetch her away to the workhouse to-morrow. Come, come along."

"I want to look at her," said Godfrey. "I think I saw such a woman yesterday. I 'll overtake you in a minute or two."

Mr. Kimble went on, and Godfrey turned back to the cottage. He cast only one glance at the dead face on the pillow, which Dolly had smoothed with decent care; but he remembered that last look at his unhappy hated wife so well, that at the end of sixteen years every line in the worn face was present to him when he told the full story of this night.

He turned immediately towards the hearth where

Silas Marner sat lulling the child. She was perfectly quiet now, but not asleep — only soothed by sweet porridge and warmth into that wide-gazing calm which makes us older human beings, with our inward turmoil, feel a certain awe in the presence of a little child, such as we feel before some quiet majesty or beauty in the earth or sky — before a steady-glowing planet, or a full-flowered eglantine, or the bending trees over a silent pathway. The wide-open blue eyes looked up at Godfrey's without any uneasiness or sign of recognition; the child could make no visible audible claim on its father; and the father felt a strange mixture of feelings, a conflict of regret and joy, that the pulse of that little heart had no response for the half-jealous yearning in his own, when the blue eyes turned away from him slowly, and fixed themselves on the weaver's queer face, which was bent low down to look at them, while the small hand began to pull Marner's withered cheek with loving disfiguration.

"You 'll take the child to the parish to-morrow?" asked Godfrey, speaking as indifferently as he could.

"Who says so?" said Marner sharply. "Will they make me take her?"

"Why, you would n't like to keep her, should you — an old bachelor like you?"

"Till anybody shows they 've a right to take her away from me," said Marner. "The mother 's dead, and I reckon it 's got no father; it 's a lone thing — and I 'm a lone thing. My money 's gone, I don't know where — and this is come from I don't know where. I know nothing — I 'm partly mazed."

"Poor little thing!" said Godfrey. "Let me give something towards finding it clothes."

He had put his hand in his pocket and found half

a guinea, and, thrusting it into Silas's hand, he hurried out of the cottage to overtake Mr. Kimble.

"Ah, I see it's not the same woman I saw," he said, as he came up. "It's a pretty little child; the old fellow seems to want to keep it; that's strange for a miser like him. But I gave him a trifle to help him out; the parish isn't likely to quarrel with him for the right to keep the child."

"No; but I've seen the time when I might have quarrelled with him for it myself. It's too late now, though. If the child ran into the fire, your aunt's too fat to overtake it; she could only sit and grunt like an alarmed sow. But what a fool you are, Godfrey, to come out in your dancing shoes and stockings in this way — and you one of the beaux of the evening, and at your own house! What do you mean by such freaks, young fellow? Has Miss Nancy been cruel, and do you want to spite her by spoiling your pumps?"

"Oh, everything has been disagreeable to-night. I was tired to death of jigging and gallanting, and that bother about the hornpipes. And I'd got to dance with the other Miss Gunn," said Godfrey, glad of the subterfuge his uncle had suggested to him.

The prevarication and white lies which a mind that keeps itself ambitiously pure is as uneasy under as a great artist under the false touches that no eye detects but his own, are worn as lightly as mere trimmings when once the actions have become a lie.

Godfrey reappeared in the White Parlor with dry feet, and, since the truth must be told, with a sense of relief and gladness that was too strong for painful thoughts to struggle with. For could he not venture now, whenever opportunity offered, to say the tenderest things to Nancy Lammeter — to promise her and him-

self that he would always be just what she would desire to see him? There was no danger that his dead wife would be recognized: those were not days of active inquiry and wide report; and as for the registry of their marriage, that was a long way off, buried in unturned pages, away from every one's interest but his own. Dunsey might betray him if he came back. but Dunsey might be won to silence

And when events turn out so much better for a man than he has had reason to dread, is it not a proof that his conduct has been less foolish and blameworthy than it might otherwise have appeared? When we are treated well, we naturally begin to think that we are not altogether unmeritorious, and that it is only just we should treat ourselves well, and not mar our own good fortune Where, after all, would be the use of his confessing the past to Nancy Lammeter, and throwing away his happiness?—nay, hers? for he felt some confidence that she loved him. As for the child, he would see that it was cared for; he would never forsake it, he would do everything but own it. Perhaps it would be just as happy in life without being owned by its father, seeing that nobody could tell how things would turn out, and that—is there any other reason wanted?—well, then, that the father would be much happier without owning the child.

CHAPTER XIV

THERE was a pauper's burial that week in Raveloe, and up Kench Yard at Batherley it was known that the dark-haired woman with the fair child, who had lately come to lodge there, was gone away again.

That was all the express note taken that Molly had disappeared from the eyes of men. But the unwept death which, to the general lot, seemed as trivial as the summer-shed leaf, was charged with the force of destiny to certain human lives that we know of, shaping their joys and sorrows even to the end.

Silas Marner's determination to keep the "tramp's child" was matter of hardly less surprise and iterated talk in the village than the robbery of his money That softening of feeling towards him which dated from his misfortune, that merging of suspicion and dislike in a rather contemptuous pity for him as lone and crazy, was now accompanied with a more active sympathy, especially amongst the women. Notable mothers, who knew what it was to keep children "whole and sweet;" lazy mothers, who knew what it was to be interrupted in folding their arms and scratching their elbows by the mischievous propensities of children just firm on their legs, were equally interested in conjecturing how a lone man would manage with a two-year-old child on his hands, and were equally ready with their suggestions: the notable chiefly telling him what he had better do, and the lazy ones being emphatic in telling him what he would never be able to do.

Among the notable mothers, Dolly Winthrop was the one whose neighborly offices were the most acceptable to Marner, for they were rendered without any show of bustling instruction. Silas had shown her the half-guinea given to him by Godfrey, and had asked her what he should do about getting some clothes for the child.

"Eh, Master Marner," said Dolly, "there 's no call to buy, no more nor a pair o' shoes: for I 've got the

little petticoats as Aaron wore five years ago, and it's ill spending the money on them baby-clothes, for the child 'ull grow like grass i' May, bless it — that it will."

And the same day Dolly brought her bundle, and displayed to Marner, one by one, the tiny garments in their due order of succession, most of them patched and darned, but clean and neat as fresh-sprung herbs. This was the introduction to a great ceremony with soap and water, from which Baby came out in new beauty, and sat on Dolly's knee, handling her toes and chuckling and patting her palms together with an air of having made several discoveries about herself, which she communicated by alternate sounds of "gug-gug-gug," and "mammy." The "mammy" was not a cry of need or uneasiness; Baby had been used to utter it without expecting either tender sound or touch to follow.

"Anybody 'ud think the angils in heaven could n't be prettier," said Dolly, rubbing the golden curls and kissing them. "And to think of its being covered wi' them dirty rags — and the poor mother — froze to death; but there 's Them as took care of it, and brought it to your door, Master Marner. The door was open, and it walked in over the snow, like as if it had been a little starved robin. Did n't you say the door was open?"

"Yes," said Silas meditatively. "Yes — the door was open. The money 's gone I don't know where, and this is come from I don't know where."

He had not mentioned to any one his unconsciousness of the child's entrance, shrinking from questions which might lead to the fact he himself suspected — namely, that he had been in one of his trances.

"Ah," said Dolly, with soothing gravity, "it 's like the night and the morning, and the sleeping and the waking, and the rain and the harvest — one goes and the other comes, and we know nothing how nor where. We may strive and scrat and fend, but it 's little we can do arter all — the big things come and go wi' no striving o' our'n — they do, that they do; and I think you 're in the right on it to keep the little un, Master Marner, seeing as it 's been sent to you, though there 's folks as thinks different. You 'll happen be a bit moithered with it while it 's so little; but I 'll come, and welcome, and see to it for you; I 've a bit o' time to spare most days, for when one gets up betimes i' the morning, the clock seems to stan' still tow'rt ten, afore it 's time to go about the victual. So, as I say, I 'll come and see to the child for you, and welcome."

"Thank you . . . kindly," said Silas, hesitating a little. "I 'll be glad if you 'll tell me things. But," he added uneasily, leaning forward to look at Baby with some jealousy, as she was resting her head backward against Dolly's arm, and eyeing him contentedly from a distance, "but I want to do things for it myself, else it may get fond o' somebody else, and not fond o' me. I 've been used to fending for myself in the house — I can learn, I can learn."

"Eh, to be sure," said Dolly gently. "I 've seen men as are wonderful handy wi' children. The men are awk'ard and contrairy mostly, God help 'em — but when the drink 's out of 'em, they are n't unsensible, though they 're bad for leeching and bandaging — so fiery and unpatient. You see this goes first, next the skin," proceeded Dolly, taking up the little shirt, and putting it on.

"Yes," said Marner docilely, bringing his eyes

very close, that they might be initiated in the mysteries; whereupon Baby seized his head with both her small arms, and put her lips against his face with purring noises.

"See there," said Dolly, with a woman's tender tact, "she 's fondest o' you. She wants to go o' your lap, I 'll be bound. Go, then; take her, Master Marner; you can put the things on, and then you can say as you 've done for her from the first of her coming to you."

Marner took her on his lap, trembling, with an emotion mysterious to himself, at something unknown dawning on his life. Thought and feeling were so confused within him that if he had tried to give them utterance, he could only have said that the child was come instead of the gold — that the gold had turned into the child. He took the garments from Dolly, and put them on under her teaching, interrupted, of course, by Baby's gymnastics.

"There, then! why, you take to it quite easy, Master Marner," said Dolly; "but what shall you do when you 're forced to sit in your loom? For she 'll get busier and mischievouser every day — she will, bless her. It 's lucky as you 've got that high hearth i'stead of a grate, for that keeps the fire more out of her reach; but if you 've got anything as can be spilt or broke, or as is fit to cut her fingers off, she 'll be at it — and it is but right you should know."

Silas meditated a little while in some perplexity. "I 'll tie her to the leg o' the loom," he said at last — "tie her with a good long strip o' something."

"Well, mayhap that 'll do, as it 's a little gell, for they 're easier persuaded to sit i' one place nor the lads. I know what the lads are, for I 've had four —

four I 've had, God knows — and if you was to take and tie 'em up, they 'd make a fighting and a crying as if you was ringing the pigs. But I 'll bring you my little chair, and some bits o' red rag and things for her to play wi' ; an' she 'll sit and chatter to 'em as if they was alive. Eh, if it was n't a sin to the lads to wish 'em made different, bless 'em, I should ha' been glad for one of 'em to be a little gell ; and to think as I could ha' taught her to scour, and mend, and the knitting, and everything. But I can teach 'em this little un, Master Marner, when she gets old enough."

"But she 'll be *my* little un," said Marner, rather hastily. "She 'll be nobody else's."

"No, to be sure ; you 'll have a right to her if you 're a father to her, and bring her up according. But," added Dolly, coming to a point which she had determined beforehand to touch upon, "you must bring her up like christened folks's children, and take her to church, and let her learn her catechise, as my little Aaron can say off — the 'I believe,' and everything, and 'hurt nobody by word or deed,' — as well as if he was the clerk. That 's what you must do, Master Marner, if you 'd do the right thing by the orphin child."

Marner's pale face flushed suddenly under a new anxiety. His mind was too busy trying to give some definite bearing to Dolly's words for him to think of answering her.

"And it 's my belief," she went on, "as the poor little creature has never been christened, and it 's nothing but right as the parson should be spoke to ; and if you was noways unwilling, I 'd talk to Mr. Macey about it this very day. For if the child ever went anyways wrong, and you had n't done your part by it

Master Marner — 'noculation, and everything to save it from harm — it 'ud be a thorn i' your bed forever o' this side the grave; and I can't think as it 'ud be easy lying down for anybody when they 'd got to another world, if they had n't done their part by the helpless children as come wi'out their own asking."

Dolly herself was disposed to be silent for some time now, for she had spoken from the depths of her own simple belief, and was much concerned to know whether her words would produce the desired effect on Silas. He was puzzled and anxious, for Dolly's word "christened" conveyed no distinct meaning to him. He had only heard of baptism, and had only seen the baptism of grown-up men and women.

"What is it as you mean by 'christened'?" he said at last timidly. "Won't folks be good to her without it?"

"Dear, dear! Master Marner," said Dolly, with gentle distress and compassion. "Had you never no father nor mother as taught you to say your prayers, and as there 's good words and good things to keep us from harm?"

"Yes," said Silas, in a low voice; "I know a deal about that — used to, used to. But your ways are different; my country was a good way off." He paused a few moments, and then added, more decidedly, "But I want to do everything as can be done for the child. And whatever 's right for it i' this country, and you think 'ull do it good, I 'll act according, if you 'll tell me."

"Well, then, Master Marner," said Dolly, inwardly rejoiced, "I 'll ask Mr. Macey to speak to the parson about it; and you must fix on a name for it, because it must have a name giv' it when it 's christened."

"My mother's name was Hephzibah," said Silas, "and my little sister was named after her."

"Eh, that's a hard name," said Dolly. "I partly think it is n't a christened name."

"It 's a Bible name," said Silas, old ideas recurring.

"Then I 've no call to speak again' it," said Dolly, rather startled by Silas's knowledge on this head: "but you see I 'm no scholard, and I 'm slow at catching the words. My husband says I 'm allays like as if I was putting the haft for the handle — that's what he says — for he 's very sharp, God help him. But it was awk'ard calling your little sister by such a hard name, when you 'd got nothing big to say, like — was n't it, Master Marner?"

"We called her Eppie," said Silas.

"Well, if it was noways wrong to shorten the name, it 'ud be a deal handier. And so I 'll go now, Master Marner, and I 'll speak about the christening afore dark; and I wish you the best o' luck, and it 's my belief as it 'll come to you, if you do what 's right by the orphin child; — and there 's the 'noculation to be seen to; and as to washing its bits o' things, you need look to nobody but me, for I can do 'em wi' one hand when I 've got my suds about. Eh, the blessed angil! You 'll let me bring my Aaron one o' these days, and he 'll show her his little cart as his father 's made for him, and the black-and-white pup as he 's got a-rearing."

Baby *was* christened, the rector deciding that a double baptism was the lesser risk to incur; and on this occasion Silas, making himself as clean and tidy as he could, appeared for the first time within the church, and shared in the observances held sacred by his neighbors. He was quite unable, by means of

anything he heard or saw, to identify the Raveloe religion with his old faith; if he could at any time in his previous life have done so, it must have been by the aid of a strong feeling ready to vibrate with sympathy rather than by a comparison of phrases and ideas; and now for long years that feeling had been dormant. He had no distinct idea about the baptism and the church-going, except that Dolly had said it was for the good of the child; and in this way, as the weeks grew to months, the child created fresh and fresh links between his life and the lives from which he had hitherto shrunk continually into narrower isolation. Unlike the gold which needed nothing, and must be worshipped in close-locked solitude, — which was hidden away from the daylight, was deaf to the song of birds, and started to no human tones, — Eppie was a creature of endless claims and ever-growing desires, seeking and loving sunshine, and living sounds, and living movements; making trial of everything, with trust in new joy, and stirring the human kindness in all eyes that looked on her. The gold had kept his thoughts in an ever-repeated circle, leading to nothing beyond itself; but Eppie was an object compacted of changes and hopes that forced his thoughts onward, and carried them far away from their old eager pacing towards the same blank limit — carried them away to the new things that would come with the coming years, when Eppie would have learned to understand how her father Silas cared for her; and made him look for images of that time in the ties and charities that bound together the families of his neighbors. The gold had asked that he should sit weaving longer and longer, deafened and blinded more and more to all things except the monotony of

his loom and the repetition of his web; but Eppie called him away from his weaving, and made him think all its pauses a holiday, reawakening his senses with her fresh life, even to the old winter-flies that came crawling forth in the early spring sunshine, and warming him into joy because *she* had joy.

And when the sunshine grew strong and lasting, so that the buttercups were thick in the meadows, Silas might be seen in the sunny mid-day, or in the late afternoon when the shadows were lengthening under the hedgerows, strolling out with uncovered head to carry Eppie beyond the Stone-pits to where the flowers grew, till they reached some favorite bank where he could sit down, while Eppie toddled to pluck the flowers, and make remarks to the winged things that murmured happily above the bright petals, calling "Dad-dad's" attention continually by bringing him the flowers. Then she would turn her ear to some sudden bird-note, and Silas learned to please her by making signs of hushed stillness, that they might listen for the note to come again: so that when it came, she set up her small back and laughed with gurgling triumph. Sitting on the banks in this way, Silas began to look for the once familiar herbs again; and as the leaves, with their unchanged outline and markings, lay on his palm, there was a sense of crowding remembrances from which he turned away timidly, taking refuge in Eppie's little world, that lay lightly on his enfeebled spirit.

As the child's mind was growing into knowledge, his mind was growing into memory; as her life unfolded, his soul, long stupefied in a cold, narrow prison, was unfolding too, and trembling gradually into full consciousness.

It was an influence which must gather force with every new year: the tones that stirred Silas's heart grew articulate, and called for more distinct answers; shapes and sounds grew clearer for Eppie's eyes and ears, and there was more that "Dad-dad" was imperatively required to notice and account for. Also, by the time Eppie was three years old, she developed a fine capacity for mischief, and for devising ingenious ways of being troublesome, which found much exercise, not only for Silas's patience, but for his watchfulness and penetration. Sorely was poor Silas puzzled on such occasions by the incompatible demands of love. Dolly Winthrop told him that punishment was good for Eppie, and that as for rearing a child without making it tingle a little in soft and safe places now and then, it was not to be done.

"To be sure, there 's another thing you might do, Master Marner," added Dolly meditatively; "you might shut her up once i' the coal-hole. That was what I did wi' Aaron; for I was that silly wi' the youngest lad as I could never bear to smack him. Not as I could find i' my heart to let him stay i' the coal-hole more nor a minute, but it was enough to colly him all over, so as he must be new washed and dressed, and it was as good as a rod to him, — that was. But I put it upo' your conscience, Master Marner, as there 's one of 'em you must choose, — ayther smacking or the coal-hole, — else she 'll get so masterful, there 'll be no holding her."

Silas was impressed with the melancholy truth of this last remark; but his force of mind failed before the only two penal methods open to him, not only because it was painful to him to hurt Eppie, but because he trembled at a moment's contention with her.

lest she should love him the less for it. Let even an affectionate Goliath get himself tied to a small tender thing, dreading to hurt it by pulling, and dreading still more to snap the cord, and which of the two, pray, will be master? It was clear that Eppie, with her short toddling steps, must lead father Silas a pretty dance on any fine morning when circumstances favored mischief.

For example. He had wisely chosen a broad strip of linen as a means of fastening her to his loom when he was busy; it made a broad belt round her waist, and was long enough to allow of her reaching the truckle-bed and sitting down on it, but not long enough for her to attempt any dangerous climbing. One bright summer's morning Silas had been more engrossed than usual in "setting up" a new piece of work, an occasion on which his scissors were in requisition. These scissors, owing to an especial warning of Dolly's, had been kept carefully out of Eppie's reach; but the click of them had had a peculiar attraction for her ear, and, watching the results of that click, she had derived the philosophic lesson that the same cause would produce the same effect. Silas had seated himself in his loom, and the noise of weaving had begun; but he had left his scissors on a ledge which Eppie's arm was long enough to reach; and now, like a small mouse, watching her opportunity, she stole quietly from her corner, secured the scissors, and toddled to the bed again, setting up her back as a mode of concealing the fact. She had a distinct intention as to the use of the scissors; and having cut the linen strip in a jagged but effectual manner, in two moments she had run out at the open door where the sunshine was inviting her, while poor Silas believed her to be a better child than usual. It was not until he happened to need his scis

sors that the terrible fact burst upon him: Eppie had run out by herself, — had perhaps fallen into the Stone-pit. Silas, shaken by the worst fear that could have befallen him, rushed out, calling "Eppie!" and ran eagerly about the unenclosed space, exploring the dry cavities into which she might have fallen, and then gazing with questioning dread at the smooth red surface of the water. The cold drops stood on his brow. How long had she been out? There was one hope — that she had crept through the stile and got into the fields where he habitually took her to stroll. But the grass was high in the meadow, and there was no descrying her, if she were there, except by a close search that would be a trespass on Mr. Osgood's crop. Still, that misdemeanor must be committed; and poor Silas, after peering all round the hedgerows, traversed the grass, beginning with perturbed vision to see Eppie behind every group of red sorrel, and to see her moving always farther off as he approached. The meadow was searched in vain; and he got over the stile into the next field, looking with dying hope towards a small pond which was now reduced to its summer shallowness, so as to leave a wide margin of good adhesive mud. Here, however, sat Eppie, discoursing cheerfully to her own small boot, which she was using as a bucket to convey the water into a deep hoof-mark, while her little naked foot was planted comfortably on a cushion of olive-green mud. A red-headed calf was observing her with alarmed doubt through the opposite hedge.

Here was clearly a case of aberration in a christened child which demanded severe treatment; but Silas, overcome with convulsive joy at finding his treasure again, could do nothing but snatch her up, and cover her

with half-sobbing kisses. It was not until he had carried her home, and had begun to think of the necessary washing, that he recollected the need that he should punish Eppie, and "make her remember." The idea that she might run away again and come to harm gave him unusual resolution, and for the first time he determined to try the coal-hole — a small closet near the hearth.

"Naughty, naughty Eppie," he suddenly began, holding her on his knee, and pointing to her muddy feet and clothes; "naughty to cut with the scissors, and run away. Eppie must go into the coal-hole for being naughty. Daddy must put her in the coal-hole."

He half expected that this would be shock enough, and that Eppie would begin to cry. But instead of that, she began to shake herself on his knee, as if the proposition opened a pleasing novelty. Seeing that he must proceed to extremities, he put her into the coal-hole, and held the door closed, with a trembling sense that he was using a strong measure. For a moment there was silence, but then came a little cry, "Opy, opy!" and Silas let her out again, saying, "Now Eppie 'ull never be naughty again, else she must go in the coal-hole — a black, naughty place."

The weaving must stand still a long while this morning, for now Eppie must be washed and have clean clothes on; but it was to be hoped that this punishment would have a lasting effect, and save time in future; though, perhaps, it would have been better if Eppie had cried more.

In half an hour she was clean again, and Silas, having turned his back to see what he could do with the linen band, threw it down again, with the reflection

that Eppie would be good without fastening for the rest of the morning. He turned round again, and was going to place her in her little chair near the loom, when she peeped out at him with black face and hands again, and said, "Eppie in de toal-hole!"

This total failure of the coal-hole discipline shook Silas's belief in the efficacy of punishment. "She 'd take it all for fun," he observed to Dolly, "if I did n't hurt her, and that I can't do, Mrs. Winthrop. If she makes me a bit o' trouble I can bear it. And she 's got no tricks but what she 'll grow out of."

"Well, that 's partly true, Master Marner," said Dolly sympathetically; "and if you can't bring your mind to frighten her off touching things, you must do what you can to keep 'em out of her way. That 's what I do wi' the pups as the lads are allays a-rearing They *will* worry and gnaw — worry and gnaw they will, if it was one's Sunday cap as hung anywhere so as they could drag it. They know no difference, God help 'em; it 's the pushing o' the teeth as sets 'em on, that 's what it is."

So Eppie was reared without punishment, the burden of her misdeeds being borne vicariously by father Silas. The stone hut was made a soft nest for her, lined with downy patience; and also in the world that lay beyond the stone hut she knew nothing of frowns and denials.

Notwithstanding the difficulty of carrying her and his yarn or linen at the same time, Silas took her with him in most of his journeys to the farm-houses, unwilling to leave her behind at Dolly Winthrop's, who was always ready to take care of her; and little curly-headed Eppie, the weaver's child, became an object of interest at several out-lying homesteads, as well as in

the village. Hitherto he had been treated very much as if he had been a useful gnome or brownie, — a queer and unaccountable creature, who must necessarily be looked at with wondering curiosity and repulsion, and with whom one would be glad to make all greetings and bargains as brief as possible, but who must be dealt with in a propitiatory way, and occasionally have a present of pork or garden-stuff to carry home with him, seeing that without him there was no getting the yarn woven. But now Silas met with open, smiling faces and cheerful questioning, as a person whose satisfactions and difficulties could be understood. Everywhere he must sit a little and talk about the child, and words of interest were always ready for him: "Ah, Master Marner, you 'll be lucky if she takes the measles soon and easy!" — or, "Why, there is n't many lone men 'ud ha' been wishing to take up with a little un like that; but I reckon the weaving makes you handier than men as do outdoor work; you 're partly as handy as a woman, for weaving comes next to spinning." Elderly masters and mistresses, seated observantly in large kitchen armchairs, shook their heads over the difficulties attendant on rearing children, felt Eppie's round arms and legs, and pronounced them remarkably firm, and told Silas that, if she turned out well (which, however, there was no telling), it would be a fine thing for him to have a steady lass to do for him when he got helpless. Servant maidens were fond of carrying her out to look at the hens and chickens, or to see if any cherries could be shaken down in the orchard; and the small boys and girls approached her slowly, with cautious movement and steady gaze, like little dogs face to face with one of their own kind, till attraction had reached the point at which the soft lips

were put out for a kiss. No child was afraid of approaching Silas when Eppie was near him: there was no repulsion around him now, either for young or old; for the little child had come to link him once more with the whole world. There was love between him and the child that blent them into one, and there was love between the child and the world — from men and women with parental looks and tones to the red ladybirds and the round pebbles.

Silas began now to think of Raveloe life entirely in relation to Eppie: she must have everything that was a good in Raveloe; and he listened docilely, that he might come to understand better what this life was, from which, for fifteen years, he had stood aloof as from a strange thing, wherewith he could have no communion; as some man who has a precious plant to which he would give a nurturing home in a new soil thinks of the rain, and the sunshine, and all influences, in relation to his nursling, and asks industriously for all knowledge that will help him to satisfy the wants of the searching roots, or to guard leaf and bud from invading harm. The disposition to hoard had been utterly crushed at the very first by the loss of his long-stored gold; the coins he earned afterwards seemed as irrelevant as stones brought to complete a house suddenly buried by an earthquake; the sense of bereavement was too heavy upon him for the old thrill of satisfaction to arise again at the touch of the newly earned coin. And now something had come to replace his hoard which gave a growing purpose to the earnings, drawing his hope and joy continually onward beyond the money.

In old days there were angels who came and took men by the hand and led them away from the city of

destruction. We see no white-winged angels now. But yet men are led away from threatening destruction: a hand is put into theirs which leads them forth gently towards a calm and bright land, so that they look no more backward; and the hand may be a little child's.

CHAPTER XV.

THERE was one person, as you will believe, who watched, with keener though more hidden interest than any other, the prosperous growth of Eppie under the weaver's care. He dared not do anything that would imply a stronger interest in a poor man's adopted child than could be expected from the kindliness of the young Squire, when a chance meeting suggested a little present to a simple old fellow whom others noticed with good-will; but he told himself that the time would come when he might do something towards furthering the welfare of his daughter without incurring suspicion. Was he very uneasy in the mean time at his inability to give his daughter her birthright? I cannot say that he was. The child was being taken care of, and would very likely be happy, as people in humble stations often were — happier, perhaps, than those brought up in luxury.

That famous ring that pricked its owner when he forgot duty and followed desire — I wonder if it pricked very hard when he set out on the chase, or whether it pricked but lightly then, and only pierced to the quick when the chase had long been ended, and Hope, folding her wings, looked backward and became Regret?

Godfrey Cass's cheek and eye were brighter than

ever now. He was so undivided in his aims that he seemed like a man of firmness. No Dunsey had come back; people had made up their minds that he was gone for a soldier, or gone "out of the country," and no one cared to be specific in their inquiries on a subject delicate to a respectable family. Godfrey had ceased to see the shadow of Dunsey across his path, and the path now lay straight forward to the accomplishment of his best, longest-cherished wishes. Everybody said Mr. Godfrey had taken the right turn; and it was pretty clear what would be the end of things, for there were not many days in the week that he was not seen riding to the Warrens. Godfrey himself, when he was asked jocosely if the day had been fixed, smiled with the pleasant consciousness of a lover who could say "yes," if he liked. He felt a reformed man, delivered from temptation; and the vision of his future life seemed to him as a promised land for which he had no cause to fight. He saw himself with all his happiness centred on his own hearth, while Nancy would smile on him as he played with the children.

And that other child — not on the hearth — he would not forget it; he would see that it was well provided for. That was a father's duty.

PART II.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was a bright autumn Sunday, sixteen years after Silas Marner had found his new treasure on the hearth. The bells of the old Raveloe church were ringing the cheerful peal which told that the morning service was ended; and out of the arched doorway in the tower came slowly, retarded by friendly greetings and questions, the richer parishioners who had chosen this bright Sunday morning as eligible for church-going. It was the rural fashion of that time for the more important members of the congregation to depart first, while their humbler neighbors waited and looked on, stroking their bent heads or dropping their curtsies to any large rate-payer who turned to notice them.

Foremost among these advancing groups of well-clad people there are some whom we shall recognize, in spite of Time, who has laid his hand on them all. The tall blond man of forty is not much changed in feature from the Godfrey Cass of six and twenty; he is only fuller in flesh, and has only lost the indefinable look of youth, — a loss which is marked even when the eye is undulled and the wrinkles are not yet come. Perhaps the pretty woman, not much younger than he, who is leaning on his arm, is more changed than her husband; the lovely bloom that used to be always on her cheek now comes but fitfully, with the fresh morning air or with some strong surprise; yet to all who love human faces best for what they tell of human

experience, Nancy's beauty has a heightened interest. Often the soul is ripened into fuller goodness while age has spread an ugly film, so that mere glances can never divine the preciousness of the fruit. But the years have not been so cruel to Nancy. The firm yet placid mouth, the clear veracious glance of the brown eyes, speak now of a nature that has been tested and has kept its highest qualities; and even the costume, with its dainty neatness and purity, has more significance now the coquetries of youth can have nothing to do with it.

Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Cass (any higher title has died away from Raveloe lips since the old Squire was gathered to his fathers and his inheritance was divided) have turned round to look for the tall aged man and the plainly dressed woman who are a little behind, — Nancy having observed that they must wait for "father and Priscilla," — and now they all turn into a narrower path leading across the churchyard to a small gate opposite the Red House. We will not follow them now; for may there not be some others in this departing congregation whom we should like to see again, — some of those who are not likely to be handsomely clad, and whom we may not recognize so easily as the master and mistress of the Red House?

But it is impossible to mistake Silas Marner. His large brown eyes seem to have gathered a longer vision, as is the way with eyes that have been short-sighted in early life, and they have a less vague, a more answering gaze; but in everything else one sees signs of a frame much enfeebled by the lapse of the sixteen years. The weaver's bent shoulders and white hair give him almost the look of advanced age, though he is not more than five and fifty; but there is the

freshest blossom of youth close by his side — a blond, dimpled girl of eighteen, who has vainly tried to chastise her curly auburn hair into smoothness under her brown bonnet; the hair ripples as obstinately as a brooklet under the March breeze, and the little ringlets burst away from the restraining comb behind and show themselves below the bonnet-crown. Eppie cannot help being rather vexed about her hair, for there is no other girl in Raveloe who has hair at all like it, and she thinks hair ought to be smooth. She does not like to be blameworthy even in small things: you see how neatly her prayer-book is folded in her spotted handkerchief.

That good-looking young fellow, in a new fustian suit, who walks behind her, is not quite sure upon the question of hair in the abstract when Eppie puts it to him, and thinks that perhaps straight hair is the best in general, but he does n't want Eppie's hair to be different. She surely divines that there is some one behind her who is thinking about her very particularly, and mustering courage to come to her side as soon as they are out in the lane, else why should she look rather shy, and take care not to turn away her head from her father Silas, to whom she keeps murmuring little sentences as to who was at church, and who was not at church, and how pretty the red mountain-ash is over the Rectory wall!

"I wish *we* had a little garden, father, with double daisies in, like Mrs. Winthrop's," said Eppie, when they were out in the lane; "only they say it 'ud take a deal of digging and bringing fresh soil, — and you could n't do that, could you, father? Anyhow, I should n't like you to do it, for it 'ud be too hard work for you."

"Yes, I could do it, child, if you want a bit o' garden: these long evenings I could work at taking in a little bit o' the waste, just enough for a root or two o' flowers for you; and again, i' the morning, I could have a turn wi' the spade before I sat down to the loom. Why did n't you tell me before as you wanted a bit o' garden?"

"*I* can dig it for you, Master Marner," said the young man in fustian, who was now by Eppie's side, entering into the conversation without the trouble of formalities. "It 'll be play to me after I 've done my day's work, or any odd bits o' time when the work 's slack. And I 'll bring you some soil from Mr. Cass's garden — he 'll let me, and willing."

"Eh, Aaron, my lad, are you there?" said Silas "I was n't aware of you; for when Eppie 's talking o things, I see nothing but what she 's a-saying. Well, if you could help me with the digging, we might get her a bit o' garden all the sooner."

"Then, if you think well and good," said Aaron, "I 'll come to the Stone-pits this afternoon, and we 'll settle what land 's to be taken in, and I 'll get up an hour earlier i' the morning, and begin on it."

"But not if you don't promise me not to work at the hard digging, father," said Eppie. "For I should n't ha' said anything about it," she added, half bashfully, half roguishly, "only Mrs. Winthrop said as Aaron 'ud be so good, and" —

"And you might ha' known it without mother telling you," said Aaron. "And Master Marner knows too, I hope, as I 'm able and willing to do a turn o' work for him, and he won't do me the unkindness to anyways take it out o' my hands."

"There, now, father, you won't work in it till it 's

all easy," said Eppie; "and you and me can mark out the beds, and make holes and plant the roots. It 'll be a deal livelier at the Stone-pits when we 've got some flowers, for I always think the flowers can see us and know what we 're talking about. And I 'll have a bit o' rosemary, and bergamot, and thyme, because they 're so sweet-smelling; but there 's no lavender only in the gentlefolks' gardens, I think."

"That 's no reason why you should n't have some," said Aaron, "for I can bring you slips of anything; I 'm forced to cut no end of 'em when I 'm gardening, and throw 'em away mostly. There 's a big bed o' lavender at the Red House; the missis is very fond of it."

"Well," said Silas gravely, "so as you don't make free for us, or ask for anything as is worth much at the Red House; for Mr. Cass 's been so good to us and built us up the new end o' the cottage, and given us beds and things, as I could n't abide to be imposin for garden-stuff or anything else."

"No, no, there 's no imposin'," said Aaron; "there 's never a garden in all the parish but what there 's endless waste in it for want o' somebody as could use everything up. It 's what I think to myself sometimes, as there need nobody run short o' victuals if the land was made the most on, and there was never a morsel but what could find its way to a mouth. It sets one thinking o' that — gardening does. But I must go back now, else mother 'ull be in trouble as I are n't there."

"Bring her with you this afternoon, Aaron," said Eppie; "I should n't like to fix about the garden, and her not know everything from the first — should *you*, father?"

"Ay, bring her if you can, Aaron," said Silas; "she 's sure to have a word to say as 'll help us to set things on their right end."

Aaron turned back up the village, while Silas and Eppie went on up the lonely sheltered lane.

"O daddy!" she began, when they were in privacy, clasping and squeezing Silas's arm, and skipping round to give him an energetic kiss. "My little old daddy! I 'm so glad. I don't think I shall want anything else when we 've got a little garden: and I knew Aaron would dig it for us," she went on with roguish triumph; "I knew that very well."

"You 're a deep little puss, you are," said Silas, with the mild, passive happiness of love-crowned age in his face; "but you 'll make yourself fine and beholden to Aaron."

"Oh, no, I shan't," said Eppie, laughing and frisking; "he likes it."

"Come, come, let me carry your prayer-book, else you 'll be dropping it, jumping i' that way."

Eppie was now aware that her behavior was under observation, but it was only the observation of a friendly donkey, browsing with a log fastened to his foot, — a meek donkey, not scornfully critical of human trivialities, but thankful to share in them, if possible, by getting his nose scratched; and Eppie did not fail to gratify him with her usual notice, though it was attended with the inconvenience of his following them, painfully, up to the very door of their home.

But the sound of a sharp bark inside, as Eppie put the key in the door, modified the donkey's views, and he limped away again without bidding. The sharp bark was the sign of an excited welcome that was awaiting them from a knowing brown terrier, who

after dancing at their legs in a hysterical manner, rushed with a worrying noise at a tortoise-shell kitten under the loom, and then rushed back with a sharp bark again, as much as to say, "I have done my duty by this feeble creature, you perceive;" while the lady-mother of the kitten sat sunning her white bosom in the window, and looked round with a sleepy air of expecting caresses, though she was not going to take any trouble for them.

The presence of this happy animal life was not the only change which had come over the interior of the stone cottage. There was no bed now in the living-room, and the small space was well filled with decent furniture, all bright and clean enough to satisfy Dolly Winthrop's eye. The oaken table and three-cornered oaken chair were hardly what was likely to be seen in so poor a cottage; they had come, with the beds and other things, from the Red House; for Mr. Godfrey Cass, as every one said in the village, did very kindly by the weaver; and it was nothing but right a man should be looked on and helped by those who could afford it, when he had brought up an orphan child, and been father and mother to her, — and had lost his money, too, so as he had nothing but what he worked for week by week, and when the weaving was going down, too, — for there was less and less flax spun, — and Master Marner was none so young. Nobody was jealous of the weaver, for he was regarded as an exceptional person, whose claims on neighborly help were not to be matched in Raveloe. Any superstition that remained concerning him had taken an entirely new color; and Mr. Macey, now a very feeble old man of fourscore and six, never seen except in his chimney-corner or sitting in the sunshine at his door

sill, was of opinion that when a man had done what Silas had done by an orphan child, it was a sign that his money would come to light again, or leastwise that the robber would be made to answer for it; for, as Mr. Macey observed of himself, his faculties were as strong as ever.

Silas sat down now and watched Eppie with a satisfied gaze as she spread the clean cloth, and set on it the potato-pie, warmed up slowly in a safe Sunday fashion, by being put into a dry pot over a slowly dying fire, as the best substitute for an oven. For Silas would not consent to have a grate and oven added to his conveniences: he loved the old brick hearth as he had loved his brown pot, — and was it not there when he had found Eppie? The gods of the hearth exist for us still; and let all new faith be tolerant of that fetishism, lest it bruise its own roots.

Silas ate his dinner more silently than usual, soon laying down his knife and fork, and watching half abstractedly Eppie's play with Snap and the cat, by which her own dining was made rather a lengthy business. Yet it was a sight that might well arrest wandering thoughts: Eppie, with the rippling radiance of her hair and the whiteness of her rounded chin and throat set off by the dark blue cotton gown, laughing merrily as the kitten held on with her four claws to one shoulder, like a design for a jug-handle, while Snap on the right hand and Puss on the other put up their paws towards a morsel which she held out of the reach of both, — Snap occasionally desisting in order to remonstrate with the cat by a cogent worrying growl on the greediness and futility of her conduct; till Eppie relented, caressed them both, and divided the morsel between them.

But at last Eppie, glancing at the clock, checked the play and said, "O daddy, you 're wanting to go into the sunshine to smoke your pipe. But I must clear away first, so as the house may be tidy when godmother comes. I 'll make haste — I won't be long."

Silas had taken to smoking a pipe daily during the last two years, having been strongly urged to it by the sages of Raveloe, as a practice "good for the fits;" and this advice was sanctioned by Dr. Kimble, on the ground that it was as well to try what could do no harm, — a principle which was made to answer for a great deal of work in that gentleman's medical practice. Silas did not highly enjoy smoking, and often wondered how his neighbors could be so fond of it; but a humble sort of acquiescence in what was held to be good had become a strong habit of that new self which had been developed in him since he had found Eppie on his hearth; it had been the only clue his bewildered mind could hold by in cherishing this young life that had been sent to him out of the darkness into which his gold had departed. By seeking what was needful for Eppie, by sharing the effect that everything produced on her, he had himself come to appropriate the forms of custom and belief which were the mould of Raveloe life; and as, with reawakening sensibilities, memory also reawakened, he had begun to ponder over the elements of his old faith, and blend them with his new impressions, till he recovered a consciousness of unity between his past and present. The sense of presiding goodness and the human trust which come with all pure peace and joy had given him a dim impression that there had been some error, some mistake, which had thrown that dark shadow over the days of his best years, and as it grew more

and more easy to him to open his mind to Dolly Winthrop, he gradually communicated to her all he could describe of his early life. The communication was necessarily a slow and difficult process, for Silas's meagre power of explanation was not aided by any readiness of interpretation in Dolly, whose narrow outward experience gave her no key to strange customs, and made every novelty a source of wonder that arrested them at every step of the narrative. It was only by fragments, and at intervals which left Dolly time to revolve what she had heard till it acquired some familiarity for her, that Silas at last arrived at the climax of the sad story, — the drawing of lots, and its false testimony concerning him; and this had to be repeated in several interviews, under new questions on her part as to the nature of this plan for detecting the guilty and clearing the innocent.

"And yourn 's the same Bible, you 're sure o' that, Master Marner — the Bible as you brought wi' you from that country — it 's the same as what they 've got at church, and what Eppie 's a-learning to read in?"

"Yes," said Silas, "every bit the same; and there 's drawing o' lots in the Bible, mind you," he added in a lower tone.

"Oh, dear, dear," said Dolly, in a grieved voice, as if she were hearing an unfavorable report of a sick man's case. She was silent for some minutes; at last she said, —

"There 's wise folks, happen, as know how it all is; the parson knows, I 'll be bound; but it takes big words to tell them things, and such as poor folks can't make much out on. I can never rightly know the meaning o' what I hear at church, only a bit here and

there, but I know it 's good words — I do. But what lies upo' your mind — it 's this, Master Marner: as, if Them above had done the right thing by you, They 'd never ha' let you be turned out for a wicked thief when you was innicent."

"Ah!" said Silas, who had now come to understand Dolly's phraseology, "that was what fell on me like as if it had been red-hot iron; because, you see, there was nobody as cared for me or clave to me above nor below. And him as I 'd gone out and in wi' for ten year and more, since when we was lads and went halves — mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, had lifted up his heel again' me, and worked to ruin me."

"Eh, but he was a bad un — I can't think as there 's another such," said Dolly. "But I 'm o'ercome, Master Marner; I 'm like as if I 'd waked and did n't know whether it was night or morning. I feel somehow as sure as I do when I 've laid something up though I can't justly put my hand on it, as there was a rights in what happened to you, if one could but make it out; and you 'd no call to lose heart as you did. But we 'll talk on it again; for sometimes things come into my head when I 'm leeching or poulticing, or such, as I could never think on when I was sitting still."

Dolly was too useful a woman not to have many opportunities of illumination of the kind she alluded to, and she was not long before she recurred to the subject.

"Master Marner," she said, one day that she came to bring home Eppie's washing, "I 've been sore puzzled for a good bit wi' that trouble o' yourn and the drawing o' lots; and it got twisted back'ards and

for ards, as I did n't know which end to lay hold on. But it come to me all clear like, that night when I was sitting up wi' poor Bessy Fawkes, as is dead and left her children behind, God help 'em — it come to me as clear as daylight; but whether I 've got hold on it now, or can anyways bring it to my tongue's end, that I don't know. For I 've often a deal inside me as 'll never come out; and for what you talk o' your folks in your old country niver saying prayers by heart nor saying 'em out of a book, they must be wonderful cliver; for if I did n't know 'Our Father,' and little bits o' good words as I can carry out o' church wi' me, I might down o' my knees every night, but nothing could I say."

"But you can mostly say something as I can make sense on, Mrs. Winthrop," said Silas.

"Well, then, Master Marner, it come to me summat like this: I can make nothing o' the drawing o' lots and the answer coming wrong; it 'ud mayhap take the parson to tell that, and he could only tell us i' big words. But what come to me as clear as the daylight, it was when I was troubling over poor Bessy Fawkes and it allays comes into my head when I 'm sorry for folks, and feel as I can't do a power to help 'em, not if I was to get up i' the middle o' the night — it comes into my head as Them above has got a deal tenderer heart nor what I 've got — for I can't be anyways better nor Them as made me; and if anything looks hard to me, it 's because there 's things I don't know on; and for the matter o' that, there may be plenty o' things I don't know on, for it 's little as I know — that it is. And so, while I was thinking o' that, you come into my mind, Master Marner, and it all come pouring in: — if *I* felt i' my inside what was the right

and just thing by you, and them as prayed and drawed the lots, all but that wicked un, if *they* 'd ha' done the right thing by you if they could, is n't there Them as was at the making on us, and knows better and has a better will? And that 's all as ever I can be sure on, and everything else is a big puzzle to me when I think on it. For there was the fever come and took off them as were full-growed, and left the helpless children; and there 's the breaking o' limbs; and them as 'ud do right and be sober have to suffer by them as are contrairy — eh, there 's trouble i' this world, and there 's things as we can niver make out the rights on. And all as we 've got to do is to trusten, Master Marner — to do the right thing as fur as we know, and to trusten. For if us as knows so little can see a bit o' good and rights, we may be sure as there 's a good and a rights bigger nor what we can know — I feel it i' my own inside as it must be so. And if you could but ha' gone on trustening, Master Marner, you would n't ha' run away from your fellow-creaturs and been so lone."

"Ah, but that 'ud ha' been hard," said Silas, in an undertone; "it 'ud ha' been hard to trusten then."

"And so it would," said Dolly, almost with compunction; "them things are easier said nor done; and I 'm partly ashamed o' talking."

"Nay, nay," said Silas, "you 're i' the right, Mrs. Winthrop — you 're i' the right. There 's good i' this world — I 've a feeling o' that now; and it makes a man feel as there 's a good more nor he can see, i' spite o' the trouble and the wickedness. That drawing o' the lots is dark; but the child was sent to me: there 's dealings with us — there 's dealings."

This dialogue took place in Eppie's earlier years

when Silas had to part with her for two hours every day, that she might learn to read at the dame school, after he had vainly tried himself to guide her in that first step to learning. Now that she was grown up, Silas had often been led, in those moments of quiet outpouring which come to people who live together in perfect love, to talk with *her*, too, of the past, and how and why he had lived a lonely man until she had been sent to him. For it would have been impossible for him to hide from Eppie that she was not his own child: even if the most delicate reticence on the point could have been expected from Raveloe gossips in her presence, her own questions about her mother could not have been parried, as she grew up, without that complete shrouding of the past which would have made a painful barrier between their minds. So Eppie had long known how her mother had died on the snowy ground, and how she herself had been found on the hearth by father Silas, who had taken her golden curls for his lost guineas brought back to him. The tender and peculiar love with which Silas had reared her in almost inseparable companionship with himself, aided by the seclusion of their dwelling, had preserved her from the lowering influences of the village talk and habits, and had kept her mind in that freshness which is sometimes falsely supposed to be an invariable attribute of rusticity. Perfect love has a breath of poetry which can exalt the relations of the least instructed human beings; and this breath of poetry had surrounded Eppie from the time when she had followed the bright gleam that beckoned her to Silas's hearth; so that it is not surprising if, in other things besides her delicate prettiness, she was not quite a common village maiden, but had a touch of refinement

and fervor which came from no other teaching than that of tenderly nurtured unvitiated feeling. She was too childish and simple for her imagination to rove into questions about her unknown father; for a long while it did not even occur to her that she must have had a father; and the first time that the idea of her mother having had a husband presented itself to her was when Silas showed her the wedding-ring which had been taken from the wasted finger, and had been carefully preserved by him in a little lacquered box shaped like a shoe. He delivered this box into Eppie's charge when she had grown up, and she often opened it to look at the ring; but still she thought hardly at all about the father of whom it was the symbol. Had she not a father very close to her, who loved her better than any real fathers in the village seemed to love their daughters? On the contrary, who her mother was and how she came to die in that forlornness were questions that often pressed on Eppie's mind. Her knowledge of Mrs. Winthrop, who was her nearest friend next to Silas, made her feel that a mother must be very precious; and she had again and again asked Silas to tell her how her mother looked, whom she was like, and how he had found her against the furze bush, led towards it by the little footsteps and the outstretched arms. The furze bush was there still; and this afternoon, when Eppie came out with Silas into the sunshine, it was the first object that arrested her eyes and thoughts.

"Father," she said, in a tone of gentle gravity, which sometimes came like a sadder, slower cadence across her playfulness, "we shall take the furze bush into the garden; it 'll come into the corner, and just against it I 'll put snowdrops and crocuses, 'cause

Aaron says they won't die out, but 'll always get more and more."

"Ah, child," said Silas, always ready to talk when he had his pipe in his hand, apparently enjoying the pauses more than the puffs, "it would n't do to leave out the furze bush; and there 's nothing prettier, to my thinking, when it 's yallow with flowers. But it 's just come into my head what we 're to do for a fence — mayhap Aaron can help us to a thought; but a fence we must have, else the donkeys and things 'ull come and trample everything down. And fencing 's hard to be got at, by what I can make out."

"Oh, I 'll tell you, daddy," said Eppie, clasping her hands suddenly, after a minute's thought. "There 's lots o' loose stones about, some of 'em not big, and we might lay 'em atop of one another, and make a wall. You and me could carry the smallest, and Aaron 'ud carry the rest — I know he would."

"Eh, my precious un," said Silas, "there is n't enough stones to go all round; and as for you carrying, why, wi' your little arms you could n't carry a stone no bigger than a turnip. You 're dillicate made, my dear," he added, with a tender intonation — "that 's what Mrs. Winthrop says."

"Oh, I 'm stronger than you think, daddy," said Eppie; "and if there was n't stones enough to go all round, why they 'll go part o' the way, and then it 'll be easier to get sticks and things for the rest. See here, round the big pit, what a many stones!"

She skipped forward to the pit, meaning to lift one of the stones and exhibit her strength, but she started back in surprise.

"Oh, father, just come and look here," she exclaimed — "come and see how the water 's gone down since

yesterday! Why, yesterday the pit was ever so full!"

"Well, to be sure," said Silas, coming to her side. "Why, that's the draining they've begun on, since harvest, i' Mr. Osgood's fields, I reckon. The foreman said to me the other day, when I passed by 'em, 'Master Marner,' he said, 'I should n't wonder if we lay your bit o' waste as dry as a bone.' It was Mr. Godfrey Cass, he said, had gone into the draining: he'd been taking these fields o' Mr. Osgood."

"How odd it 'll seem to have the old pit dried up!" said Eppie, turning away, and stooping to lift rather a large stone. "See, daddy, I can carry this quite well," she said, going along with much energy for a few steps, but presently letting it fall.

"Ah, you're fine and strong, are n't you?" said Silas, while Eppie shook her aching arms and laughed. "Come, come, let us go and sit down on the bank against the stile there, and have no more lifting. You might hurt yourself, child. You'd need have somebody to work for you — and my arm is n't over strong."

Silas uttered the last sentence slowly, as if it implied more than met the ear; and Eppie, when they sat down on the bank, nestled close to his side, and, taking hold caressingly of the arm that was not over strong, held it on her lap, while Silas puffed again dutifully at the pipe, which occupied his other arm. An ash in the hedgerow behind made a fretted screen from the sun, and threw happy playful shadows all about them.

"Father," said Eppie, very gently, after they had been sitting in silence a little while, "if I was to be married, ought I to be married with my mother's ring?"

Silas gave an almost imperceptible start, though the question fell in with the under-current of thought in his own mind, and then said, in a subdued tone, "Why, Eppie, have you been a-thinking on it?"

"Only this last week, father," said Eppie, ingenuously, "since Aaron talked to me about it."

"And what did he say?" said Silas, still in the same subdued way, as if he were anxious lest he should fall into the slightest tone that was not for Eppie's good.

"He said he should like to be married, because he was a-going in four and twenty, and had got a deal of gardening work, now Mr. Mott 's given up; and he goes twice a week regular to Mr. Cass's, and once to Mr. Osgood's, and they 're going to take him on at the Rectory."

"And who is it as he 's wanting to marry?" said Silas, with rather a sad smile.

"Why, me, to be sure, daddy," said Eppie, with dimpling laughter, kissing her father's cheek; "as if he 'd want to marry anybody else!"

"And you mean to have him, do you?" said Silas.

"Yes, some time," said Eppie, "I don't know when. Everybody 's married some time, Aaron says. But I told him that was n't true; for, I said, look at father — he 's never been married."

"No, child," said Silas, "your father was a lone man till you was sent to him."

"But you 'll never be lone again, father," said Eppie tenderly. "That was what Aaron said — 'I could never think o' taking you away from Master Marner, Eppie.' And I said, 'It 'ud be no use if you did, Aaron.' And he wants us all to live together, so

as you need n't work a bit, father, only what 's for your own pleasure; and he 'd be as good as a son to you — that was what he said."

"And should you like that, Eppie?" said Silas, looking at her.

"I should n't mind it, father," said Eppie, quite simply. "And I should like things to be so as you need n't work much. But if it was n't for that, I 'd sooner things did n't change. I 'm very happy: I like Aaron to be fond of me, and come and see us often, and behave pretty to you — he always *does* behave pretty to you, does n't he, father?"

"Yes, child, nobody could behave better," said Silas emphatically. "He 's his mother's lad."

"But I don't want any change," said Eppie. "I should like to go on a long, long while, just as we are Only Aaron does want a change; and he made me cry a bit — only a bit — because he said I did n't care for him, for if I cared for him I should want us to be married, as he did."

"Eh, my blessed child," said Silas, laying down his pipe as if it were useless to pretend to smoke any longer, "you 're o'er young to be married. We 'll ask Mrs. Winthrop — we 'll ask Aaron's mother what *she* thinks; if there 's a right thing to do, she 'll come at it. But there 's this to be thought on, Eppie: things *will* change, whether we like it or not; things won't go on for a long while just as they are and no difference. I shall get older and helplesser, and be a burden on you, belike, if I don't go away from you altogether. Not as I mean you 'd think me a burden — I know you would n't — but it 'ud be hard upon you; and when I look for'ard to that, I like to think as you 'd have somebody else besides me — somebody young

and strong, as 'll outlast your own life, and take care on you to the end." Silas paused, and, resting his wrists on his knees, lifted his hands up and down meditatively as he looked on the ground.

"Then, would you like me to be married, father?" said Eppie, with a little trembling in her voice.

"I 'll not be the man to say no, Eppie," said Silas emphatically; "but we 'll ask your godmother. She'll wish the right thing by you and her son, too."

"There they come then," said Eppie. "Let us go and meet 'em. Oh, the pipe! won't you have it lit again, father?" said Eppie, lifting that medicinal appliance from the ground.

"Nay, child," said Silas, "I 've done enough for to-day. I think, mayhap, a little of it does me more good than so much at once."

CHAPTER XVII.

While Silas and Eppie were seated on the bank discoursing in the fleckered shade of the ash-tree, Miss Priscilla Lammeter was resisting her sister's arguments, that it would be better to take tea at the Red House, and let her father have a long nap, than drive home to the Warrens so soon after dinner. The family party (of four only) were seated round the table in the dark wainscoted parlor, with the Sunday dessert before them, of fresh filberts, apples, and pears, duly ornamented with leaves by Nancy's own hand before the bells had rung for church.

A great change has come over the dark wainscoted parlor since we saw it in Godfrey's bachelor days, and under the wifeless reign of the old Squire. Now all

is polish, on which no yesterday's dust is ever allowed to rest, from the yard's width of oaken boards round the carpet to the old Squire's gun and whips and walking-sticks, ranged on the stag's antlers above the mantelpiece. All other signs of sporting and outdoor occupation Nancy has removed to another room; but she has brought into the Red House the habit of filial reverence, and preserves sacredly in a place of honor these relics of her husband's departed father. The tankards are on the side-table still, but the bossed silver is undimmed by handling, and there are no dregs to send forth unpleasant suggestions: the only prevailing scent is of the lavender and rose-leaves that fill the vases of Derbyshire spar. All is purity and order in this once dreary room, for, fifteen years ago, it was entered by a new presiding spirit.

"Now, father," said Nancy, "*is* there any call for you to go home to tea? May n't you just as well stay with us? — such a beautiful evening as it 's likely to be."

The old gentleman had been talking with Godfrey about the increasing poor-rate and the ruinous times, and had not heard the dialogue between his daughters.

"My dear, you must ask Priscilla," he said, in the once firm voice, now become rather broken. "She manages me and the farm too."

"And reason good as I should manage you, father," said Priscilla, "else you 'd be giving yourself your death with rheumatism. And as for the farm, if anything turns out wrong, as it can't but do in these times, there 's nothing kills a man so soon as having nobody to find fault with but himself. It 's a deal the best way o' being master, to let somebody else do the order

ing, and keep the blaming in your own hands. It 'ud save many a man a stroke, *I* believe."

"Well, well, my dear," said her father, with a quiet laugh, "I did n't say you don't manage for everybody's good."

"Then manage so as you may stay tea, Priscilla," said Nancy, putting her hand on her sister's arm affectionately. "Come now; and we 'll go round the garden while father has his nap."

"My dear child, he 'll have a beautiful nap in the gig, for I shall drive. And as for staying tea, I can't hear of it; for there 's this dairymaid, now she knows she 's to be married, turned Michaelmas, she 'd as lieve pour the new milk into the pig-trough as into the pans. That 's the way with 'em all: it 's as if they thought the world 'ud be new-made because they 're to be married. So come and let me put my bonnet on, and there 'll be time for us to walk round the garden while the horse is being put in."

When the sisters were treading the neatly swept garden-walks, between the bright turf that contrasted pleasantly with the dark cones and arches and wall-like hedges of yew, Priscilla said, —

"I 'm as glad as anything at your husband 's making that exchange o' land with cousin Osgood, and beginning the dairying. It 's a thousand pities you did n't do it before; for it 'll give you something to fill your mind. There 's nothing like a dairy if folks want a bit o' worrit to make the days pass. For as for rubbing furniture, when you can once see your face in a table there 's nothing else to look for; but there 's always something fresh with the dairy; for even in the depths o' winter there 's some pleasure in conquering the butter, and making it come whether or no

My dear," added Priscilla, pressing her sister's hand affectionately as they walked side by side, "you 'll never be low when you 've got a dairy."

"Ah, Priscilla," said Nancy, returning the pressure with a grateful glance of her clear eyes, "but it won't make up to Godfrey: a dairy 's not so much to a man. And it 's only what he cares for that ever makes me low. I 'm contented with the blessings we have, if he could be contented."

"It drives me past patience," said Priscilla impetuously, "that way o' the men — always wanting and wanting, and never easy with what they 've got: they can't sit comfortable in their chairs when they 've neither ache nor pain, but either they must stick a pipe in their mouths, to make 'em better than well, or else they must be swallowing something strong, though they 're forced to make haste before the next meal comes in. But joyful be it spoken, our father was never that sort o' man. And if it had pleased God to make you ugly, like me, so as the men would n't ha' run after you, we might have kept to our own family, and had nothing to do with folks as have got uneasy blood in their veins."

"Oh, don't say so, Priscilla," said Nancy, repenting that she had called forth this outburst; "nobody has any occasion to find fault with Godfrey. It 's natural he should be disappointed at not having any children: every man likes to have somebody to work for and lay by for, and he always counted so on making a fuss with 'em when they were little. There 's many another man 'ud hanker more than he does. He 's the best of husbands."

"Oh, I know," said Priscilla, smiling sarcastically, "I know the way o' wives; they set one on to abuse

their husbands, and then they turn round on one and praise 'em as if they wanted to sell 'em. But father 'll be waiting for me; we must turn now."

The large gig with the steady old gray was at the front door, and Mr. Lammeter was already on the stone steps, passing the time in recalling to Godfrey what very fine points Speckle had when his master used to ride him.

"I always *would* have a good horse, you know," said the old gentleman, not liking that spirited time to be quite effaced from the memory of his juniors.

"Mind you bring Nancy to the Warrens before the week 's out, Mr. Cass," was Priscilla's parting injunction, as she took the reins, and shook them gently, by way of friendly incitement to Speckle.

"I shall just take a turn to the fields against the Stone-pits, Nancy, and look at the draining," said Godfrey.

"You 'll be in again by tea-time, dear?"

"Oh, yes, I shall be back in an hour."

It was Godfrey's custom on a Sunday afternoon to do a little contemplative farming in a leisurely walk. Nancy seldom accompanied him; for the women of her generation — unless, like Priscilla, they took to out-door management — were not given to much walking beyond their own house and garden, finding sufficient exercise in domestic duties. So, when Priscilla was not with her, she usually sat with Mant's Bible before her, and after following the text with her eyes for a little while, she would gradually permit them to wander as her thoughts had already insisted on wandering.

But Nancy's Sunday thoughts were rarely quite out of keeping with the devout and reverential inten-

tion implied by the book spread open before her. She was not theologically instructed enough to discern very clearly the relation between the sacred documents of the past which she opened without method, and her own obscure, simple life; but the spirit of rectitude, and the sense of responsibility for the effect of her conduct on others, which were strong elements in Nancy's character, had made it a habit with her to scrutinize her past feelings and actions with self-questioning solicitude. Her mind not being courted by a great variety of subjects, she filled the vacant moments by living inwardly, again and again, through all her remembered experience, especially through the fifteen years of her married time, in which her life and its significance had been doubled. She recalled the small details, the words, tones, and looks, in the critical scenes which had opened a new epoch for her by giving her a deeper insight into the relations and trials of life, or which had called on her for some little effort of forbearance, or of painful adherence to an imagined or real duty — asking herself continually whether she had been in any respect blamable. This excessive rumination and self-questioning is perhaps a morbid habit inevitable to a mind of much moral sensibility when shut out from its due share of outward activity and of practical claims on its affections — inevitable to a noble-hearted, childless woman, when her lot is narrow. "I can do so little — have I done it all well?" is the perpetually recurring thought; and there are no voices calling her away from that soliloquy, no peremptory demands to divert energy from vain regret or superfluous scruple.

There was one main thread of painful experience in Nancy's married life, and on it hung certain deeply

felt scenes, which were the oftenest revived in retrospect. The short dialogue with Priscilla in the garden had determined the current of retrospect in that frequent direction this particular Sunday afternoon. The first wandering of her thought from the text, which she still attempted dutifully to follow with her eyes and silent lips, was into an imaginary enlargement of the defence she had set up for her husband against Priscilla's implied blame. The vindication of the loved object is the best balm affection can find for its wounds. "A man must have so much on his mind," is the belief by which a wife often supports a cheerful face under rough answers and unfeeling words. And Nancy's deepest wounds had all come from the perception that the absence of children from their hearth was dwelt on in her husband's mind as a privation to which he could not reconcile himself.

Yet sweet Nancy might have been expected to feel still more keenly the denial of a blessing to which she had looked forward with all the varied expectations and preparations, solemn and prettily trivial, which fill the mind of a loving woman when she expects to become a mother. Was there not a drawer filled with the neat work of her hands, all unworn and untouched, just as she had arranged it there fourteen years ago — just, but for one little dress, which had been made the burial-dress? But under this immediate personal trial Nancy was so firmly unmurmuring, that years ago she had suddenly renounced the habit of visiting this drawer, lest she should in this way be cherishing a longing for what was not given.

Perhaps it was this very severity towards any indulgence of what she held to be sinful regret in herself that made her shrink from applying her own

standard to her husband. "It is very different — it is much worse for a man to be disappointed in that way: a woman can always be satisfied with devoting herself to her husband, but a man wants something that will make him look forward more — and sitting by the fire is so much duller to him than to a woman." And always, when Nancy reached this point in her meditations — trying, with predetermined sympathy, to see everything as Godfrey saw it — there came a renewal of self-questioning. *Had* she done everything in her power to lighten Godfrey's privation? Had she really been right in the resistance which had cost her so much pain six years ago, and again four years ago — the resistance to her husband's wish that they should adopt a child? Adoption was more remote from the ideas and habits of that time than of our own; still Nancy had her opinion on it. It was as necessary to her mind to have an opinion on all topics, not exclusively masculine, that had come under her notice, as for her to have a precisely marked place for every article of her personal property: and her opinions were always principles to be unwaveringly acted on. They were firm, not because of their basis, but because she held them with a tenacity inseparable from her mental action. On all the duties and proprieties of life, from filial behavior to the arrangements of the evening toilette, pretty Nancy Lammeter, by the time she was three and twenty, had her unalterable little code, and had formed every one of her habits in strict accordance with that code. She carried these decided judgments within her in the most unobtrusive way: they rooted themselves in her mind, and grew there as quietly as grass. Years ago, we know, she insisted on dressing like Priscilla, because

"it was right for sisters to dress alike," and because "she would do what was right if she wore a gown dyed with cheese-coloring." That was a trivial but typical instance of the mode in which Nancy's life was regulated.

It was one of those rigid principles, and no petty egoistic feeling, which had been the ground of Nancy's difficult resistance to her husband's wish. To adopt a child, because children of your own had been denied you, was to try and choose your lot in spite of Providence: the adopted child, she was convinced, would never turn out well, and would be a curse to those who had wilfully and rebelliously sought what it was clear that, for some high reason, they were better without. When you saw a thing was not meant to be, said Nancy, it was a bounden duty to leave off so much as wishing for it. And so far, perhaps, the wisest of men could scarcely make more than a verbal improvement in her principle. But the conditions under which she held it apparent that a thing was not meant to be depended on a more peculiar mode of thinking. She would have given up making a purchase at a particular place if, on three successive times, rain, or some other cause of Heaven's sending, had formed an obstacle; and she would have anticipated a broken limb or other heavy misfortune to any one who persisted in spite of such indications.

"But why should you think the child would turn out ill?" said Godfrey, in his remonstrances. "She has thriven as well as child can do with the weaver; and *he* adopted her. There is n't such a pretty little girl anywhere else in the parish, or one fitter for the station we could give her. Where can be the likelihood of her being a curse to anybody?"

"Yes, my dear Godfrey," said Nancy, who was sitting with her hands tightly clasped together, and with yearning, regretful affection in her eyes. "The child may not turn out ill with the weaver. But, then, he didn't go to seek her, as we should be doing. It will be wrong; I feel sure it will. Don't you remember what that lady we met at the Royston Baths told us about the child her sister adopted? That was the only adopting I ever heard of: and the child was transported when it was twenty-three. Dear Godfrey, don't ask me to do what I know is wrong: I should never be happy again. I know it's very hard for *you* —it's easier for me—but it's the will of Providence."

It might seem singular that Nancy — with her religious theory pieced together out of narrow social traditions, fragments of church doctrine imperfectly understood, and girlish reasonings on her small experience — should have arrived by herself at a way of thinking so nearly akin to that of many devout people, whose beliefs are held in the shape of a system quite remote from her knowledge — singular, if we did not know that human beliefs, like all other natural growths, elude the barriers of system.

Godfrey had from the first specified Eppie, then about twelve years old, as a child suitable for them to adopt. It had never occurred to him that Silas would rather part with his life than with Eppie. Surely the weaver would wish the best to the child he had taken so much trouble with, and would be glad that such good fortune should happen to her; she would always be very grateful to him, and he would be well provided for to the end of his life — provided for as the excellent part he had done by the child deserved. Was it not an appropriate thing for

people in a higher station to take a charge off the hands of a man in a lower? It seemed an eminently appropriate thing to Godfrey, for reasons that were known only to himself; and by a common fallacy, he imagined the measure would be easy because he had private motives for desiring it. This was rather a coarse mode of estimating Silas's relation to Eppie; but we must remember that many of the impressions which Godfrey was likely to gather concerning the laboring people around him would favor the idea that deep affections can hardly go along with callous palms and scant means; and he had not had the opportunity, even if he had had the power, of entering intimately into all that was exceptional in the weaver's experience. It was only the want of adequate knowledge that could have made it possible for Godfrey deliberately to entertain an unfeeling project: his natural kindness had outlived that blighting time of cruel wishes, and Nancy's praise of him as a husband was not founded entirely on a wilful illusion.

"I was right," she said to herself, when she had recalled all their scenes of discussion — "I feel I was right to say him nay, though it hurt me more than anything; but how good Godfrey has been about it! Many men would have been very angry with me for standing out against their wishes; and they might have thrown out that they 'd had ill-luck in marrying me; but Godfrey has never been the man to say me an unkind word. It 's only what he can't hide: everything seems so blank to him, I know; and the land — what a difference it 'ud make to him, when he goes to see after things, if he 'd children growing up that he was doing it all for! But I won't murmur; and perhaps if he 'd married a woman who 'd have had children, she 'd have vexed him in other ways."

This possibility was Nancy's chief comfort; and to give it greater strength, she labored to make it impossible that any other wife should have had more perfect tenderness. She had been *forced* to vex him by that one denial. Godfrey was not insensible to her loving effort, and did Nancy no injustice as to the motives of her obstinacy. It was impossible to have lived with her fifteen years and not be aware that an unselfish clinging to the right and a sincerity clear as the flower-born dew were her main characteristics; indeed, Godfrey felt this so strongly, that his own more wavering nature, too averse to facing difficulty to be unvaryingly simple and truthful, was kept in a certain awe of this gentle wife who watched his looks with a yearning to obey them. It seemed to him impossible that he should ever confess to her the truth about Eppie: she would never recover from the repulsion the story of his earlier marriage would create, told to her now, after that long concealment. And the child, too, he thought, must become an object of repulsion: the very sight of her would be painful. The shock to Nancy's mingled pride and ignorance of the world's evil might even be too much for her delicate frame. Since he had married her with that secret on his heart he must keep it there to the last. Whatever else he did, he could not make an irreparable breach between himself and this long-loved wife.

Meanwhile, why could he not make up his mind to the absence of children from a hearth brightened by such a wife? Why did his mind fly uneasily to that void, as if it were the sole reason why life was not thoroughly joyous to him? I suppose it is the way with all men and women who reach middle age without the clear perception that life never *can* be thor-

oughly joyous: under the vague dulness of the gray hours, dissatisfaction seeks a definite object, and finds it in the privation of an untried good. Dissatisfaction, seated musingly on a childless hearth, thinks with envy of the father whose return is greeted by young voices — seated at the meal where the little heads rise one above another like nursery plants, it sees a black care hovering behind every one of them, and thinks the impulses by which men abandon freedom, and seek for ties, are surely nothing but a brief madness. In Godfrey's case there were further reasons why his thoughts should be continually solicited by this one point in his lot: his conscience, never thoroughly easy about Eppie, now gave his childless home the aspect of a retribution; and as the time passed on, under Nancy's refusal to adopt her, any retrieval of his error became more and more difficult.

On this Sunday afternoon it was already four years since there had been any allusion to the subject between them, and Nancy supposed that it was forever buried.

"I wonder if he 'll mind it less or more as he gets older," she thought; "I 'm afraid more. Aged people feel the miss of children: what would father do without Priscilla? And if I die, Godfrey will be very lonely — not holding together with his brothers much. But I won't be over-anxious, and trying to make things out beforehand: I must do my best for the present."

With that last thought Nancy roused herself from her reverie, and turned her eyes again towards the forsaken page. It had been forsaken longer than she imagined, for she was presently surprised by the appearance of the servant with the tea-things. It was

in fact, a little before the usual time for tea; but Jane had her reasons.

"Is your master come into the yard, Jane?"

"No 'm, he is n't," said Jane, with a slight emphasis, of which, however, her mistress took no notice.

"I don't know whether you 've seem 'em, 'm," continued Jane, after a pause, "but there 's folks making haste all one way, afore the front window. I doubt something 's happened. There 's niver a man to be seen i' the yard, else I 'd send and see. I 've been up into the top attic, but there 's no seeing anything for trees. I hope nobody 's hurt, that 's all."

"Oh, no, I daresay there 's nothing much the matter," said Nancy. "It 's perhaps Mr. Snell's bull got out again, as he did before."

"I wish he may n't gore anybody, then, that 's all,' said Jane, not altogether despising a hypothesis which covered a few imaginary calamities.

"That girl is always terrifying me," thought Nancy; "I wish Godfrey would come in."

She went to the front window and looked as far as she could see along the road, with an uneasiness which she felt to be childish, for there were now no such signs of excitement as Jane had spoken of, and Godfrey would not be likely to return by the village road but by the fields. She continued to stand, however, looking at the placid churchyard with the long shadows of the gravestones across the bright green hillocks, and at the glowing autumn colors of the Rectory trees beyond. Before such calm external beauty the presence of a vague fear is more distinctly felt — like a raven flapping its slow wing across the sunny air. Nancy wished more and more that Godfrey would come in.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Some one opened the door at the other end of the room, and Nancy felt that it was her husband. She turned from the window with gladness in her eyes, for the wife 's chief dread was stilled.

"Dear, I 'm so thankful you 're come," she said, going towards him. "I began to get" —

She paused abruptly, for Godfrey was laying down his hat with trembling hands, and turned towards her with a pale face and a strange unanswering glance, as if he saw her indeed, but saw her as part of a scene invisible to herself. She laid her hand on his arm, not daring to speak again; but he left the touch unnoticed, and threw himself into his chair.

Jane was already at the door with the hissing urn. "Tell her to keep away, will you?" said Godfrey; and when the door was closed again he exerted himself to speak more distinctly.

"Sit down, Nancy — there," he said, pointing to a chair opposite him. "I came back as soon as I could, to hinder anybody's telling you but me. I 've had a great shock — but I care most about the shock it 'll be to you."

"It is n't father and Priscilla?" said Nancy, with quivering lips, clasping her hands together tightly on her lap.

"No, it 's nobody living," said Godfrey, unequal to the considerate skill with which he would have wished to make his revelation. "It 's Dunstan — my brother Dunstan, that we lost sight of sixteen years ago. We 've found him — found his body — his skeleton."

The deep dread Godfrey's look had created in Nancy made her feel these words a relief. She sat in comparative calmness to hear what else he had to tell. He went on: —

"The Stone-pit has gone dry suddenly — from the draining, I suppose; and there he lies — has lain for sixteen years, wedged between two great stones. There 's his watch and seals, and there 's my gold-handled hunting-whip, with my name on: he took it away, without my knowing, the day he went hunting on Wildfire, the last time he was seen."

Godfrey paused: it was not so easy to say what came next. "Do you think he drowned himself?" said Nancy, almost wondering that her husband should be so deeply shaken by what had happened all those years ago to an unloved brother, of whom worse things had been augured.

"No, he fell in," said Godfrey, in a low but distinct voice, as if he felt some deep meaning in the fact. Presently he added: "Dunstan was the man that robbed Silas Marner."

The blood rushed to Nancy's face and neck at this surprise and shame, for she had been bred up to regard even a distant kinship with crime as a dishonor.

"O Godfrey!" she said, with compassion in her tone, for she had immediately reflected that the dishonor must be felt still more keenly by her husband.

"There was the money in the pit," he continued — "all the weaver's money. Everything 's been gathered up, and they 're taking the skeleton to the Rainbow. But I came back to tell you: there was no hindering it; you must know."

He was silent, looking on the ground for two long

minutes. Nancy would have said some words of comfort under this disgrace, but she refrained, from an instinctive sense that there was something behind — that Godfrey had something else to tell her. Presently he lifted his eyes to her face, and kept them fixed on her, as he said, —

"Everything comes to light, Nancy, sooner or later. When God Almighty wills it, our secrets are found out. I've lived with a secret on my mind, but I'll keep it from you no longer. I would n't have you know it by somebody else, and not by me — I would n't have you find it out after I 'm dead. I'll tell you now. It 's been 'I will' and 'I won't' with me all my life — I 'll make sure of myself now."

Nancy's utmost dread had returned. The eyes of the husband and wife met with awe in them, as at a crisis which suspended affection.

"Nancy," said Godfrey slowly, "when I married you, I hid something from you — something I ought to have told you. That woman Marner found dead in the snow — Eppie's mother — that wretched woman — was my wife: Eppie is my child."

He paused, dreading the effect of his confession. But Nancy sat quite still, only that her eyes dropped and ceased to meet his. She was pale and quiet as a meditative statue, clasping her hands on her lap.

"You 'll never think the same of me again,' said Godfrey, after a little while, with some tremor in his voice.

She was silent.

"I ought n't to have left the child unowned: I ought n't to have kept it from you. But I could n't bear to give you up, Nancy. I was led away into marrying her — I suffered for it."

Still Nancy was silent, looking down; and he almost expected that she would presently get up and say she would go to her father's. How could she have any mercy for faults that must seem so black to her, with her simple, severe notions?

But at last she lifted up her eyes to his again and spoke. There was no indignation in her voice — only deep regret.

"Godfrey, if you had but told me this six years ago, we could have done some of our duty by the child. Do you think I'd have refused to take her in, if I'd known she was yours?"

At that moment Godfrey felt all the bitterness of an error that was not simply futile, but had defeated its own end. He had not measured this wife with whom he had lived so long. But she spoke again, with more agitation.

"And — O Godfrey — if we'd had her from the first, if you'd taken to her as you ought, she'd have loved me for her mother — and you'd have been happier with me: I could better have bore my little baby dying, and our life might have been more like what we used to think it 'ud be."

The tears fell, and Nancy ceased to speak.

"But you would n't have married me then, Nancy, if I'd told you," said Godfrey, urged, in the bitterness of his self-reproach, to prove to himself that his conduct had not been utter folly. "You may think you would now, but you would n't then. With your pride and your father's, you'd have hated having anything to do with me after the talk there'd have been."

"I can't say what I should have done about that, Godfrey. I should never have married anybody else. But I was n't worth doing wrong for — nothing is in

this world. Nothing is so good as it seems beforehand — not even our marrying was n't, you see." There was a faint sad smile on Nancy's face as she said the last words.

"I 'm a worse man than you thought I was, Nancy," said Godfrey, rather tremulously. "Can you forgive me ever?"

"The wrong to me is but little, Godfrey; you 've made it up to me — you 've been good to me for fifteen years. It 's another you did the wrong to; and I doubt it can never be all made up for."

"But we can take Eppie now," said Godfrey. "I won't mind the world knowing at last. I 'll be plain and open for the rest o' my life."

"It 'll be different coming to us, now she 's grown up," said Nancy, shaking her head sadly. "But it 's your duty to acknowledge her and provide for her; and I 'll do my part by her, and pray to God Almighty to make her love me."

"Then we 'll go together to Silas Marner's this very night, as soon as everything 's quiet at the Stone-pits."

CHAPTER XIX.

Between eight and nine o'clock that evening Eppie and Silas were seated alone in the cottage. After the great excitement the weaver had undergone from the events of the afternoon, he had felt a longing for this quietude, and had even begged Mrs. Winthrop and Aaron, who had naturally lingered behind every one else, to leave him alone with his child. The excitement had not passed away: it had only reached that stage when the keenness of the susceptibility makes

external stimulus intolerable — when there is no sense of weariness, but rather an intensity of inward life, under which sleep is an impossibility. Any one who has watched such moments in other men remembers the brightness of the eyes and the strange definiteness that comes over coarse features from that transient influence. It is as if a new fineness of ear for all spiritual voices had sent wonder-working vibrations through the heavy mortal frame — as if "beauty born of murmuring sound" had passed into the face of the listener.

Silas's face showed that sort of transfiguration, as he sat in his armchair and looked at Eppie. She had drawn her own chair towards his knees, and leaned forward, holding both his hands, while she looked up at him. On the table near them, lit by a candle, lay the recovered gold — the old long-loved gold, ranged in orderly heaps, as Silas used to range it in the days when it was his only joy. He had been telling her how he used to count it every night, and how his soul was utterly desolate till she was sent to him.

"At first, I 'd a sort o' feeling come across me now and then," he was saying in a subdued tone, "as if you might be changed into the gold again; for sometimes, turn my head which way I would, I seemed to see the gold; and I thought I should be glad if I could feel it, and find it was come back. But that did n't last long. After a bit, I should have thought it was a curse come again if it had drove you from me, for I 'd got to feel the need o' your looks and your voice and the touch o' your little fingers. You did n't know then, Eppie, when you were such a little un — you did n't know what your old father Silas felt for you."

"But I know now, father," said Eppie. "If it had n't been for you, they 'd have taken me to the

workhouse, and there 'd have been nobody to love me."

"Eh, my precious child, the blessing was mine. If you had n't been sent to save me, I should ha' gone to the grave in my misery. The money was taken away from me in time; and you see it 's been kept — kept till it was wanted for you. It 's wonderful — our life is wonderful."

Silas sat in silence a few minutes, looking at the money. "It takes no hold of me now," he said, ponderingly — "the money does n't. I wonder if it ever could again — I doubt it might if I lost you, Eppie. I might come to think I was forsaken again, and lose the feeling that God was good to me."

At that moment there was a knocking at the door, and Eppie was obliged to rise without answering Silas. Beautiful she looked, with the tenderness of gathering tears in her eyes and a slight flush on her cheeks, as she stepped to open the door. The flush deepened when she saw Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Cass. She made her little rustic curtsy, and held the door wide for them to enter.

"We 're disturbing you very late, my dear," said Mrs. Cass, taking Eppie's hand, and looking in her face with an expression of anxious interest and admiration. Nancy herself was pale and tremulous.

Eppie, after placing chairs for Mr. and Mrs. Cass, went to stand against Silas, opposite to them.

"Well, Marner," said Godfrey, trying to speak with perfect firmness, "it 's a great comfort to me to see you with your money again, that you 've been deprived of so many years. It was one of my family did you the wrong, — the more grief to me, — and I feel bound to make up to you for it in every way

Whatever I can do for you will be nothing but paying a debt, even if I looked no further than the robbery. But there are other things I 'm beholden — shall be beholden to you for, Marner."

Godfrey checked himself. It had been agreed between him and his wife that the subject of his fatherhood should be approached very carefully, and that, if possible, the disclosure should be reserved for the future, so that it might be made to Eppie gradually. Nancy had urged this, because she felt strongly the painful light in which Eppie must inevitably see the relation between her father and mother.

Silas, always ill at ease when he was being spoken to by "betters," such as Mr. Cass, — tall, powerful, florid men, seen chiefly on horseback — answered with some constraint, —

"Sir, I 've a deal to thank you for a'ready. As for the robbery, I count it no loss to me. And if I did, you could n't help it: you are n't answerable for it."

"You may look at it in that way, Marner, but I never can; and I hope you 'll let me act according to my own feeling of what 's just. I know you 're easily contented: you 've been a hard-working man all your life."

"Yes, sir, yes," said Marner meditatively. "I should ha' been bad off without my work: it was what I held by when everything else was gone from me."

"Ah," said Godfrey, applying Marner's words simply to his bodily wants, "it was a good trade for you in this country, because there 's been a great deal of linen-weaving to be done. But you 're getting rather past such close work, Marner: it 's time you laid by and had some rest. You look a good deal pulled down, though you 're not an old man, *are* you?"

"Fifty-five, as near as I can say, sir," said Silas.

"Oh, why, you may live thirty years longer — look at old Macey! And that money on the table, after all, is but little. It won't go far either way — whether it 's put out to interest, or you were to live on it as long as it would last: it would n't go far if you 'd nobody to keep but yourself, and you 've had two to keep for a good many years now."

"Eh, sir," said Silas, unaffected by anything Godfrey was saying, "I 'm in no fear o' want. We shall do very well — Eppie and me 'ull do well enough. There 's few working-folks have got so much laid by as that. I don't know what it is to gentlefolks, but I look upon it as a deal — almost too much. And as for us, it 's little we want."

"Only the garden, father," said Eppie, blushing up to the ears the moment after.

"You love a garden, do you, my dear?" said Nancy, thinking that this turn in the point of view might help her husband. "We should agree in that: I give a deal of time to the garden."

"Ah, there 's plenty of gardening at the Red House," said Godfrey, surprised at the difficulty he found in approaching a proposition which had seemed so easy to him in the distance. "You 've done a good part by Eppie, Marner, for sixteen years. It 'ud be a great comfort to you to see her well provided for, would n't it? She looks blooming and healthy, but not fit for any hardships: she does n't look like a strapping girl come of working parents. You 'd like to see her taken care of by those who can leave her well off, and make a lady of her; she 's more fit for it than for a rough life, such as she might come to have in a few years' time."

A slight flush came over Marner's face, and disappeared, like a passing gleam. Eppie was simply wondering Mr. Cass should talk so about things that seemed to have nothing to do with reality; but Silas was hurt and uneasy.

"I don't take your meaning, sir," he answered, not having words at command to express the mingled feelings with which he had heard Mr. Cass's words.

"Well, my meaning is this, Marner," said Godfrey, determined to come to the point. "Mrs. Cass and I, you know, have no children — nobody to be the better for our good home and everything else we have — more than enough for ourselves. And we should like to have somebody in the place of a daughter to us — we should like to have Eppie, and treat her in every way as our own child. It 'ud be a great comfort to you in your old age, I hope, to see her fortune made in that way, after you 've been at the trouble of bringing her up so well. And it 's right you should have every reward for that. And Eppie, I 'm sure, will always love you and be grateful to you: she 'd come and see you very often, and we should all be on the lookout to do everything we could towards making you comfortable."

A plain man like Godfrey Cass, speaking under some embarrassment, necessarily blunders on words that are coarser than his intentions, and that are likely to fall gratingly on susceptible feelings. While he had been speaking, Eppie had quietly passed her arm behind Silas's head, and let her hand rest against it caressingly: she felt him trembling violently. He was silent for some moments when Mr. Cass had ended — powerless under the conflict of emotions, all alike painful. Eppie's heart was swelling at the sense

that her father was in distress; and she was just going to lean down and speak to him, when one struggling dread at last gained the mastery over every other in Silas, and he said faintly, —

"Eppie, my child, speak. I won't stand in your way. Thank Mr. and Mrs. Cass."

Eppie took her hand from her father's head, and came forward a step. Her cheeks were flushed, but not with shyness this time: the sense that her father was in doubt and suffering banished that sort of self-consciousness. She dropped a low curtsy, first to Mrs. Cass and then to Mr. Cass, and said, —

"Thank you, ma'am — thank you, sir. But I can't leave my father, nor own anybody nearer than him. And I don't want to be a lady — thank you all the same" (here Eppie dropped another curtsy). "I could n't give up the folks I 've been used to."

Eppie's lip began to tremble a little at the last words. She retreated to her father's chair again, and held him round the neck; while Silas, with a subdued sob, put up his hand to grasp hers.

The tears were in Nancy's eyes, but her sympathy with Eppie was, naturally, divided with distress on her husband's account. She dared not speak, wondering what was going on in her husband's mind.

Godfrey felt an irritation inevitable to almost all of us when we encounter an unexpected obstacle. He had been full of his own penitence and resolution to retrieve his error as far as the time was left to him; he was possessed with all-important feelings, that were to lead to a predetermined course of action which he had fixed on as the right, and he was not prepared to enter with lively appreciation into other people's feelings counteracting his virtuous resolves. The agita-

tion with which he spoke again was not quite unmixed with anger.

"But I've a claim on you, Eppie — the strongest of all claims. It's my duty, Marner, to own Eppie as my child, and provide for her. She's my own child: her mother was my wife. I've a natural claim on her that must stand before every other."

Eppie had given a violent start, and turned quite pale. Silas, on the contrary, who had been relieved, by Eppie's answer, from the dread lest his mind should be in opposition to hers, felt the spirit of resistance in him set free, not without a touch of parental fierceness. "Then, sir," he answered, with an accent of bitterness that had been silent in him since the memorable day when his youthful hope had perished — "then, sir, why did n't you say so sixteen years ago, and claim her before I'd come to love her, i'stead o' coming to take her from me now, when you might as well take the heart out o' my body? God gave her to me because you turned your back upon her, and He looks upon her as mine: you've no right to her! When a man turns a blessing from his door, it falls to them as take it in."

"I know that, Marner. I was wrong. I've repented of my conduct in that matter," said Godfrey, who could not help feeling the edge of Silas's words.

"I'm glad to hear it, sir," said Marner, with gathering excitement; "but repentance does n't alter what's been going on for sixteen year. Your coming now and saying 'I'm her father,' does n't alter the feelings inside us. It's me she's been calling her father ever since she could say the word."

"But I think you might look at the thing more reasonably, Marner," said Godfrey, unexpectedly awed

by the weaver's direct truth-speaking. "It is n't as if she was to be taken quite away from you, so that you 'd never see her again. She 'll be very near you, and come to see you very often. She 'll feel just the same towards you."

"Just the same?" said Marner, more bitterly than ever. "How 'll she feel just the same for me as she does now, when we eat o' the same bit, and drink o' the same cup, and think o' the same things from one day's end to another? Just the same? That 's idle talk. You 'd cut us i' two."

Godfrey, unqualified by experience to discern the pregnancy of Marner's simple words, felt rather angry again. It seemed to him that the weaver was very selfish (a judgment readily passed by those who have never tested their own power of sacrifice) to oppose what was undoubtedly for Eppie's welfare; and he felt himself called upon, for her sake, to assert his authority.

"I should have thought, Marner," he said severely, — "I should have thought your affection for Eppie would make you rejoice in what was for her good, even if it did call upon you to give up something. You ought to remember your own life 's uncertain, and she 's at an age now when her lot may soon be fixed in a way very different from what it would be in her father's home: she may marry some low working-man, and then, whatever I might do for her, I could n't make her well off. You 're putting yourself in the way of her welfare; and though I 'm sorry to hurt you after what you 've done, and what I 've left undone, I feel now it 's my duty to insist on taking care of my own daughter. I want to do my duty."

It would be difficult to say whether it were Silas or Eppie that was most deeply stirred by this last speech of Godfrey's. Thought had been very busy in Eppie as she listened to the contest between her old long-loved father and this new unfamiliar father who had suddenly come to fill the place of that black featureless shadow which had held the ring and placed it on her mother's finger. Her imagination had darted backward in conjectures, and forward in previsions, of what this revealed fatherhood implied; and there were words in Godfrey's last speech which helped to make the previsions especially definite. Not that these thoughts, either of past or future, determined her resolution — *that* was determined by the feelings which vibrated to every word Silas had uttered; but they raised, even apart from these feelings, a repulsion towards the offered lot and the newly-revealed father.

Silas, on the other hand, was again stricken in conscience, and alarmed lest Godfrey's accusation should be true — lest he should be raising his own will as an obstacle to Eppie's good. For many moments he was mute, struggling for the self-conquest necessary to the uttering of the difficult words. They came out tremulously.

"I 'll say no more. Let it be as you will. Speak to the child. I 'll hinder nothing."

Even Nancy, with all the acute sensibility of her own affections, shared her husband's view, that Marner was not justifiable in his wish to retain Eppie, after her real father had avowed himself. She felt that it was a very hard trial for the poor weaver, but her code allowed no question that a father by blood must have a claim above that of any foster-father. Besides, Nancy, used all her life to plenteous circum-

stances and the privileges of "respectability," could not enter into the pleasures which early nurture and habit connect with all the little aims and efforts of the poor who are born poor: to her mind, Eppie, in being restored to her birthright, was entering on a too long withheld but unquestionable good. Hence she heard Silas's last words with relief, and thought, as Godfrey did, that their wish was achieved.

"Eppie, my dear," said Godfrey, looking at his daughter, not without some embarrassment, under the sense that she was old enough to judge him, "it 'll always be our wish that you should show your love and gratitude to one who 's been a father to you so many years, and we shall want to help you to make him comfortable in every way. But we hope you 'll come to love us as well; and though I have n't been what a father should ha' been to you all these years, I wish to do the utmost in my power for you for the rest of my life, and provide for you as my only child. And you 'll have the best of mothers in my wife — that 'll be a blessing you have n't known since you were old enough to know it."

"My dear, you 'll be a treasure to me," said Nancy, in her gentle voice. "We shall want for nothing when we have our daughter."

Eppie did not come forward and curtsy, as she had done before. She held Silas's hand in hers, and grasped it firmly — it was a weaver's hand, with a palm and finger-tips that were sensitive to such pressure — while she spoke with colder decision than before.

"Thank you, ma'am — thank you, sir, for your offers — they 're very great, and far above my wish. For I should have no delight i' life any more if I was

forced to go away from my father, and knew he was sitting at home, a-thinking of me and feeling lone. We 've been used to be happy together every day, and I can't think o' no happiness without him. And he says he 'd nobody i' the world till I was sent to him, and he 'd have nothing when I was gone. And he 's took care of me and loved me from the first, and I 'll cleave to him as long as he lives, and nobody shall ever come between him and me."

"But you must make sure, Eppie," said Silas, in a low voice — "you must make sure as you won't ever be sorry, because you 've made your choice to stay among poor folks, and with poor clothes and things, when you might ha' had everything o' the best."

His sensitiveness on this point had increased as he listened to Eppie's words of faithful affection.

"I can never be sorry, father," said Eppie. "I should n't know what to think on or to wish for with fine things about me, as I have n't been used to. And it 'ud be poor work for me to put on things, and ride in a gig, and sit in a place at church, as 'ud make them as I 'm fond of think me unfitting company for 'em. What could *I* care for then?"

Nancy looked at Godfrey with a pained, questioning glance. But his eyes were fixed on the floor, where he was moving the end of his stick, as if he were pondering on something absently. She thought there was a word which might perhaps come better from her lips than from his.

"What you say is natural, my dear child — it 's natural you should cling to those who 've brought you up," she said mildly; "but there 's a duty you owe to your lawful father. There 's perhaps something to be given up on more sides than one. When your father

opens his home to you, I think it 's right you should n't turn your back on it."

"I can't feel as I 've got any father but one," said Eppie impetuously, while the tears gathered. "I 've always thought of a little home where he 'd sit i' the corner, and I should fend and do everything for him: I can't think o' no other home. I was n't brought up to be a lady, and I can't turn my mind to it. I like the working-folks, and their victuals, and their ways. And," she ended passionately, while the tears fell, "I 'm promised to marry a working-man, as 'll live with father, and help me to take care of him."

Godfrey looked up at Nancy with a flushed face and smarting, dilated eyes. This frustration of a purpose towards which he had set out under the exalted consciousness that he was about to compensate in some degree for the greatest demerit of his life, made him feel the air of the room stifling.

"Let us go," he said, in an undertone.

"We won't talk of this any longer now," said Nancy, rising. "We 're your well-wishers, my dear — and yours too, Marner. We shall come and see you again. It 's getting late now."

In this way she covered her husband's abrupt departure, for Godfrey had gone straight to the door, unable to say more.

CHAPTER XX.

Nancy and Godfrey walked home under the starlight in silence. When they entered the oaken parlor, Godfrey threw himself into his chair, while Nancy laid down her bonnet and shawl, and stood on the

hearth near her husband, unwilling to leave him even for a few minutes, and yet fearing to utter any word lest it might jar on his feeling. At last Godfrey turned his head towards her, and their eyes met, dwelling in that meeting without any movement on either side. That quiet mutual gaze of a trusting husband and wife is like the first moment of rest or refuge from a great weariness or a great danger — not to be interfered with by speech or action which would distract the sensations from the fresh enjoyment of repose.

But presently he put out his hand, and as Nancy placed hers within it, he drew her towards him, and said, —

"That 's ended!"

She bent to kiss him, and then said, as she stood by his side, "Yes, I 'm afraid we must give up the hope of having her for a daughter. It would n't be right to want to force her to come to us against her will. We can't alter her bringing up and what 's come of it."

"No," said Godfrey, with a keen decisiveness of tone, in contrast with his usually careless and unemphatic speech — "there 's debts we can't pay like money debts, by paying extra for the years that have slipped by. While I 've been putting off and putting off, the trees have been growing — it 's too late now. Marner was in the right in what he said about a man's turning away a blessing from his door: it falls to somebody else. I wanted to pass for childless once, Nancy — I shall pass for childless now against my wish."

Nancy did not speak immediately, but after a little while she asked, "You won't make it known, then, about Eppie's being your daughter?"

"No — where would be the good to anybody? — only harm. I must do what I can for her in the state of life she chooses. I must see who it is she 's thinking of marrying."

"If it won't do any good to make the thing known," said Nancy, who thought she might now allow herself the relief of entertaining a feeling which she had tried to silence before, "I should be very thankful for father and Priscilla never to be troubled with knowing what was done in the past, more than about Dunsey: it can't be helped, their knowing that."

"I shall put it in my will — I think I shall put it in my will. I should n't like to leave anything to be found out. like this about Dunsey," said Godfrey meditatively. "But I can't see anything but difficulties that 'ud come from telling it now. I must do what I can to make her happy in her own way. I 've a notion," he added, after a moment's pause, "it 's Aaron Winthrop she meant she was engaged to. I remember seeing him with her and Marner going away from church."

"Well, he 's very sober and industrious," said Nancy, trying to view the matter as cheerfully as possible.

Godfrey fell into thoughtfulness again. Presently he looked up at Nancy sorrowfully, and said, —

"She 's a very pretty, nice girl, is n't she, Nancy?"

"Yes, dear; and with just your hair and eyes. I wondered it had never struck me before."

"I think she took a dislike to me at the thought of my being her father. I could see a change in her manner after that."

"She could n't bear to think of not looking on Marner as her father," said Nancy, not wishing to confirm her husband's painful impression.

"She thinks I did wrong by her mother as well as by her. She thinks me worse than I am. But she *must* think it: she can never know all. It 's part of my punishment, Nancy, for my daughter to dislike me. I should never have got into that trouble if I 'd been true to you — if I had n't been a fool. I 'd no right to expect anything but evil could come of that marriage — and when I shirked doing a father's part too."

Nancy was silent: her spirit of rectitude would not let her try to soften the edge of what she felt to be a just compunction. He spoke again after a little while, but the tone was rather changed: there was tenderness mingled with the previous self-reproach.

"And I got *you*, Nancy, in spite of all; and yet I 've been grumbling and uneasy because I had n't something else — as if I deserved it."

"You 've never been wanting to me, Godfrey," said Nancy, with quiet sincerity. "My only trouble would be gone if you resigned yourself to the lot that 's been given us."

"Well, perhaps it is n't too late to mend a bit there. Though it *is* too late to mend some things, say what they will."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE next morning, when Silas and Eppie were seated at their breakfast, he said to her, —

"Eppie, there 's a thing I 've had on my mind to do this two year, and now the money 's been brought back to us, we can do it. I 've been turning it over and over in the night, and I think we 'll set out to-morrow,

while the fine days last. We 'll leave the house and everything for your godmother to take care on, and we 'll make a little bundle o' things and set out."

"Where to go, daddy?" said Eppie, in much surprise.

"To my old country — to the town where I was born — up Lantern Yard. I want to see Mr. Paston, the minister: something may ha' come out to make 'em know I was innicent o' the robbery. And Mr. Paston was a man with a deal o' light — I want to speak to him about the drawing o' the lots. And I should like to talk to him about the religion o' this country-side, for I partly think he does n't know on it."

Eppie was very joyful, for there was the prospect not only of wonder and delight at seeing a strange country, but also of coming back to tell Aaron all about it. Aaron was so much wiser than she was about most things — it would be rather pleasant to have this little advantage over him. Mrs. Winthrop, though possessed with a dim fear of dangers attendant on so long a journey, and requiring many assurances that it would not take them out of the region of carriers' carts and slow wagons, was nevertheless well pleased that Silas should revisit his own country, and find out if he had been cleared from that false accusation.

"You 'd be easier in your mind for the rest o' your life, Master Marner," said Dolly — "that you would. And if there 's any light to be got up the Yard as you talk on, we 've need of it i' this world, and I 'd be glad on it myself, if you could bring it back."

So, on the fourth day from that time, Silas and Eppie, in their Sunday clothes, with a small bundle tied in a blue linen handkerchief, were making their

way through the streets of a great manufacturing town. Silas, bewildered by the changes thirty years had brought over his native place, had stopped several persons in succession to ask them the name of this town, that he might be sure he was not under a mistake about it.

"Ask for Lantern Yard, father — ask this gentleman with the tassels on his shoulders a-standing at the shop door; he is n't in a hurry like the rest," said Eppie, in some distress at her father's bewilderment, and ill at ease, besides, amidst the noise, the movement, and the multitude of strange indifferent faces.

"Eh, my child, he won't know anything about it," said Silas; "gentlefolks did n't ever go up the Yard. But happen somebody can tell me which is the way to Prison Street, where the jail is. I know the way out o' that as if I 'd seen it yesterday."

With some difficulty, after many turnings and new inquiries, they reached Prison Street; and the grim walls of the jail, the first object that answered to any image in Silas's memory, cheered him with the certitude, which no assurance of the town's name had hitherto given him, that he was in his native place.

"Ah," he said, drawing a long breath, "there 's the jail, Eppie; that 's just the same: I are n't afraid now. It 's the third turning on the left hand from the jail doors — that 's the way we must go."

"Oh, what a dark ugly place!" said Eppie. "How it hides the sky! It 's worse than the workhouse. I 'm glad you don't live in this town now, father. Is Lantern Yard like this street?"

"My precious child," said Silas, smiling, "it is n't a big street like this. I never was easy i' this street myself, but I was fond o' Lantern Yard. The shops

here are all altered, I think — I can't make 'em out; but I shall know the turning, because it 's the third."

"Here it is," he said, in a tone of satisfaction, as they came to a narrow alley. "And then we must go to the left again, and then straight for'ard for a bit, up Shoe Lane; and then we shall be at the entry next to the o'erhanging window, where there 's the nick in the road for the water to run. Eh, I can see it all."

"O father, I 'm like as if I was stifled," said Eppie. "I could n't ha' thought as any folks lived i' this way, so close together. How pretty the Stonepits 'ull look when we get back!"

"It looks comical to *me*, child, now — and smells bad. I can't think as it usened to smell so."

Here and there a sallow, begrimed face looked out from a gloomy doorway at the strangers, and increased Eppie's uneasiness, so that it was a longed-for relief when they issued from the alleys into Shoe Lane, where there was a broader strip of sky.

"Dear heart!" said Silas; "why, there 's people coming out o' the Yard as if they 'd been to chapel at this time o' day — a weekday noon!"

Suddenly he started and stood still with a look of distressed amazement, that alarmed Eppie. They were before an opening in front of a large factory, from which men and women were streaming for their midday meal.

"Father," said Eppie, clasping his arm, "what 's the matter?"

But she had to speak again and again before Silas could answer her.

"It 's gone, child," he said, at last, in strong agitation — "Lantern Yard 's gone. It must ha' been here

because here's the house with the o'erhanging window — I know that — it's just the same; but they've made this new opening; and see that big factory! It's all gone — chapel and all."

"Come into that little brush-shop and sit down, father — they'll let you sit down," said Eppie, always on the watch lest one of her father's strange attacks should come on. "Perhaps the people can tell you all about it."

But neither from the brush-maker, who had come to Shoe Lane only ten years ago, when the factory was already built, nor from any other source within his reach, could Silas learn anything of the old Lantern Yard friends, or of Mr. Paston, the minister.

"The old place is all swep' away," Silas said to Dolly Winthrop on the night of his return — "the little graveyard and everything. The old home's gone; I've no home but this now. I shall never know whether they got at the truth o' the robbery, nor whether Mr. Paston could ha' given me any light about the drawing o' the lots. It's dark to me, Mrs. Winthrop, that is; I doubt it'll be dark to the last."

"Well, yes, Master Marner," said Dolly, who sat with a placid listening face, now bordered by gray hairs; "I doubt it may. It's the will o' Them above as a many things should be dark to us; but there's some things as I've never felt i' the dark about, and they're mostly what comes i' the day's work. You were hard done by that once, Master Marner, and it seems as you'll never know the rights of it; but that does n't hinder there *being* a rights, Master Marner, for all it's dark to you and me."

"No," said Silas, "no; that does n't hinder. Since the time the child was sent to me and I've come to

love her as myself, I've had light enough to trusten by; and, now she says she 'll never leave me, I think I shall trusten till I die."

CONCLUSION.

THERE was one time of the year which was held in Raveloe to be especially suitable for a wedding. It was when the great lilacs and laburnums in the old-fashioned gardens showed their golden and purple wealth above the lichen-tinted walls, and when there were calves still young enough to want bucketfuls of fragrant milk. People were not so busy then as they must become when the full cheese-making and the mowing had set in; and, besides, it was a time when a light bridal dress could be worn with comfort and seen to advantage.

Happily the sunshine fell more warmly than usual on the lilac tufts the morning that Eppie was married, for her dress was a very light one. She had often thought, though with a feeling of renunciation, that the perfection of a wedding-dress would be a white cotton, with the tiniest pink sprig at wide intervals; so that when Mrs. Godfrey Cass begged to provide one, and asked Eppie to choose what it should be, previous meditation had enabled her to give a decided answer at once.

Seen at a little distance as she walked across the churchyard and down the village, she seemed to be attired in pure white, and her hair looked like the dash of gold on a lily. One hand was on her husband's arm, and with the other she clasped the hand of her father Silas.

"You won't be giving me away, father," she had said before they went to church; "you 'll only be taking Aaron to be a son to you."

Dolly Winthrop walked behind with her husband; and there ended the little bridal procession.

There were many eyes to look at it, and Miss Priscilla Lammeter was glad that she and her father had happened to drive up to the door of the Red House just in time to see this pretty sight. They had come to keep Nancy company to-day, because Mr. Cass had had to go away to Lytherly, for special reasons. That seemed to be a pity, for otherwise he might have gone, as Mr. Crackenthorp and Mr. Osgood certainly would, to look on at the wedding-feast which he had ordered at the Rainbow, naturally feeling a great interest in the weaver who had been wronged by one of his own family.

"I could ha' wished Nancy had had the luck to find a child like that and bring her up," said Priscilla to her father, as they sat in the gig; "I should ha' had something young to think of then, besides the lambs and the calves."

"Yes, my dear, yes," said Mr. Lammeter; "one feels that as one gets older. Things look dim to old folks: they 'd need have some young eyes about 'em, to let 'em know the world 's the same as it used to be."

Nancy came out now to welcome her father and sister; and the wedding-group had passed on beyond the Red House to the humbler part of the village.

Dolly Winthrop was the first to divine that old Mr. Macey, who had been set in his armchair outside his own door, would expect some special notice as they passed, since he was too old to be at the wedding feast.

"Mr. Macey's looking for a word from us," said Dolly; "he'll be hurt if we pass him and say nothing — and him so racked with rheumatiz."

So they turned aside to shake hands with the old man. He had looked forward to the occasion, and had his premeditated speech.

"Well, Master Marner," he said, in a voice that quavered a good deal, "I've lived to see my words come true. I was the first to say there was no harm in you, though your looks might be again' you; and I was the first to say you'd get your money back. And it's nothing but rightful as you should. And I'd ha' said the 'Amens,' and willing, at the holy matrimony; but Tookey's done it a good while now, and I hope you'll have none the worse luck."

In the open yard before the Rainbow the party of guests were already assembled, though it was still nearly an hour before the appointed feast-time. But by this means they could not only enjoy the slow advent of their pleasure; they had also ample leisure to talk of Silas Marner's strange history, and arrive by due degrees at the conclusion that he had brought a blessing on himself by acting like a father to a lone, motherless child. Even the farrier did not negative this sentiment: on the contrary, he took it up as peculiarly his own, and invited any hardy person present to contradict him. But he met with no contradiction; and all differences among the company were merged in a general agreement with Mr. Snell's sentiment, that when a man had deserved his good luck, it was the part of his neighbors to wish him joy.

As the bridal group approached, a hearty cheer was raised in the Rainbow yard; and Ben Winthrop, whose jokes had retained their acceptable flavor, found it

agreeable to turn in there and receive congratulations; not requiring the proposed interval of quiet at the Stone-pits before joining the company.

Eppie had a larger garden than she had ever expected there now; and in other ways there had been alterations at the expense of Mr. Cass, the landlord, to suit Silas's larger family. For he and Eppie had declared that they would rather stay at the Stone-pits than go to any new home. The garden was fenced with stones on two sides, but in front there was an open fence, through which the flowers shone with answering gladness, as the four united people came within sight of them.

"O father," said Eppie, "what a pretty home ours is! I think nobody could be happier than we are."

NOTES.

SILAS MARNER. The *Introduction* deals with the characteristics of *Silas Marner*, but a few passages from George Eliot's journal and letters will show the attitude which the author bore to her work. Under date of November 28, 1860, she wrote : —

"I am engaged now in writing a story — the idea of which came to me after our arrival in this house,[1] and which has thrust itself between me and the other book [2] I was meditating. It is *Silas Marner, the Weaver of Raveloe.*"

On the last day of the same year she wrote : "I am writing a story which came *across* my other plans by a sudden inspiration. I don't know at present whether it will resolve itself into a book short enough for me to complete before Easter, or whether it will expand beyond that possibility. It seems to me that nobody will take any interest in it but myself, for it is extremely unlike the popular stories going ; but Mr. Lewes declares that I am wrong, and says it is as good as anything I have done. It is a story of old-fashioned village life, which has unfolded itself from the merest millet-seed of thought."

Again, February 24, 1861 : —

"I don't wonder at your finding my story, as far as you have read it, rather sombre ; indeed, I should not have believed that any one would have been interested in it but myself (since Wordsworth is dead) if Mr. Lewes had not been strongly arrested by it. But I hope you will not find it at all a sad story, as a whole, since it sets — or is intended to set — in a strong light the remedial influences of pure, natural human relations. . . It came to me first of all quite suddenly, as a sort of legendary tale, suggested by my recollection of having once, in early childhood, seen a linen weaver with a bag on his back."

[1] "This house" was 10 Harewood Square, London, to which they had moved September 25.

[2] "The other book" was *Romola*, for which she had been gathering material in her visit to Italy.

The last pages of the story were sent by the author to the printer on the tenth of March. The reception of the book by the public was hearty.

Page 4. *Raveloe.* Though this name is not found in the gazetteers, the description of place and people may be accepted as faithful portraiture of English country life. Until she was thirty years old George Eliot lived entirely "in the rich central plain," and "drunk in knowledge of the country and of country folk at all her pores."

Page 4. *Merry*, in the phrase "Merry England," does not mean mirthful, but is used in its older sense of pleasant, agreeable.

Page 4. *Homesteads*, the homes of independent land-owners.

Page 5. *Manor*, in legal theory, an estate held by grant from the crown, and portioned among tenants.

Page 5. *Those war times.*

From the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789, to the Congress of Vienna in 1815, Europe had been in a general state of warfare in which England had taken her full share. But the war during its continuance brought prosperity to the agricultural classes and the manufacturers. The armies must be fed and clothed. Moreover during this period there was no importation of foreign grain, and prices of food rose to a point hitherto unexampled. Land-owners were not slow to take advantage of the situation, and rents were gradually increased, until at the close of the war they were double what they had been at its beginning.

Page 7. *Tale.* A thing that is *told* in the sense of counted. The word reappears in our familiar *tally*, the keeping of a tale.

Page 9. *David and Jonathan.*

For the Bible story, see 1 Samuel.xviii.

Page 23. *Not all of them as honest as their ancestors in the days of King Alfred.*

In King Alfred's time it was said that a purse of gold lying in the highway was safe from thieves.

Page 24. *Brownish web.* All linen is brown when woven, being bleached afterward.

Page 26. *Squire Cass had a tenant or two who complained of the game to him quite as if he had been a lord.*

The English game laws have been a fruitful source of trouble between landlords and tenants. The most stringent means have

been taken to preserve the game for the pleasures of hunting, immense tracts, on the great estates of the nobility, being devoted to this purpose alone. In a country unable to produce its own food, there has naturally been much complaint, both of the alienation of so much land from cultivation and of the depredations made by the game upon the crops of the tenants, the tenants being unable to defend themselves by shooting so much as a hare.

Page 26. *It was still that glorious war time . . . the fall of prices had not yet come.*

See note above (page 5.) With the close of the war and the return of great numbers of men to productive occupations, prices naturally fell. The restoration of normal commercial relations tended to the same result. But the land-owners of England were also the law-makers; and to combat this decline in prices, which would mean also a decline in rents, they passed the corn-law of 1815, which provided that no grain should be imported until wheat in the English markets had been for six months at or over eighty shillings per quarter.

Page 26. *Currents of industrial energy.*

The manufacturing towns of the middle and north of England were increasing rapidly in importance in the early part of this century, owing largely to the introduction of improved machinery.

Page 27. *When the seasons brought round the great merrymakings.*

Easter, Whitsuntide, Michaelmas, and especially Christmas, were made the occasions of much mirth and jollity, as well as of special religious observances. Christmas festivities were sometimes continued until Candlemas, and usually for twelve days.

In the *Spectator* we read: "Sir Roger [de Coverley], after the laudable custom of his ancestors, always keeps open house at Christmas. I learned from him that he had killed eight fat hogs for this season, that he had dealt about his chines very liberally among his neighbors, and that in particular he had sent a string of hogs' puddings with a pack of cards to every poor family in the parish. 'I have often thought,' says Sir Roger, 'it happens very well that Christmas should fall out in the middle of winter. It is the most dead, uncomfortable time of the year, when the poor people would suffer very much from

their poverty and cold if they had not good cheer, warm fires, and Christmas gambols to support them. I love to rejoice their poor hearts at this season, and to see the whole village merry in my great hall. I allow a double quantity of malt to my small beer, and set it a running for twelve days to every one that calls for it. I have always a piece of cold beef and a mince pie upon the table, and am wonderfully pleased to see my tenants pass away a whole evening in playing their innocent tricks and smutting one another.' "

Page 36. *Crooked sixpence.* To carry a crooked sixpence was supposed to bring luck.

Page 47. *Latch-hole.* A simple door-fastening was a wooden latch moved up and down by a leather string which was left hanging out through a hole when it was desired that any comer should enter, and drawn in when the contrary condition existed. Hence to "leave the latch-string out" has become a proverbial expression of welcome and hospitality.

Page 47. *Jack,* an instrument for turning a spit.

Page 47. *Horn lantern.* Before glass was common and cheap, horn scraped thin was used in lanterns.

Page 65. *Afore the Queen's heads went out on the shillings.* Several issues of shillings were made in Queen Anne's time, bearing her likeness. How old, then, was the sign "Macey, Tailor"?

Page 74. *Nolo episcopari,* I do not wish to be made a bishop; hence a disclaimer of desire to be chosen for any service.

Page 80. *The sizes,* assizes, county courts.

Page 88. *Unstring.* To be liberal with his money. A figure derived doubtless from old-fashioned purses drawn up with strings.

Page 88. *Prices 'ud run down like a jack.* See note above (page 47). Some jacks ran by clockwork and could be set to run for a definite time, but as the mechanism was rude they sometimes ran down suddenly and speedily.

Page 96. *Mural monument,* a monument built into a church wall.

Page 99. *Black pudding,* sausages.

Page 100. *When the parson and me does the cussing of a Ash Wednesday.*

The "cussing of a Ash Wednesday" has reference to the reading of the commination service required on that day in

the Church of England, in which the several sentences begin "Cursed is he."

Page 103. *Right to the burying service.* In the prayer-book of the Church of England the following direction is prefixed to the burial service:—

"Here it is to be noted that the Office ensuing is not to be used for any unbaptized adults, any who die excommunicate, or who have laid violent hands upon themselves."

Page 105. *I. H. S.* Much used as a Christian symbol from very early times, and most probably taken from the Greek name Jesus, of which it forms the first three letters, the H being the shape taken by the Greek E, but also interpreted as standing for *In Hoc Signo*, and *Jesus Hominum Salvator.*

Page 107. *There was churches — a many — . . . But I knew nothing of 'em — I went to a chapel.*

The houses of worship of all dissenters from the Established Church are called chapels.

Page 112. *The Athanasian Creed*, long erroneously attributed to Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria in the fourth century, contains a very elaborate statement of the doctrine of the trinity.

Page 119. *Be whom she might.* Is the construction correct?

Page 123. *Mawkin*, written also malkin and maukin, a scarecrow, a caricature of a woman in dress and appearance.

Page 127. *Since the old king fell ill.*

In 1810, George III., whose mind had long been weak, became hopelessly insane, and the Prince of Wales, afterward George IV., was appointed regent.

Page 128. "*Breed was stronger than pasture.*"

This saying shows that the discussion of heredity and environment is not altogether modern.

Page 132. *Sir Roger de Coverley.* This old English dancing tune is at least as old as the reign of Charles I., being referred to in a tract in the King's Pamphlets, published in 1648; and according to Ralph Thoresby's MS. history of the Coverley or Calverley family of Yorkshire, it was named after a knight who lived in the time of Richard I., renowned for his hospitality.

Page 134. *Springe.* Provincial English. Active, brisk.

Page 153. *Happen.* Provincial English. Abbreviation of "it may happen," — possibly, perhaps. The contraction *mappen* is also used.

Page 160. *Moithered*, written also moidered, — perplexed, distracted.

Page 160. *Fend*, a contraction of defend. To provide for, to take care. It survives in boys' play.

Page 162. *Ringing the pigs.* Putting rings in the pigs' snouts.

Page 181. *Fine and beholden.* This intensive use of *fine* is common in George Eliot's midland dialect. See frequent examples in *Adam Bede* and *The Mill on the Floss.*

Page 196. *The increasing poor-rate and the ruinous times.*

Owing to the demoralizing effect of war, and the bad administration of the poor-laws, the amount of money spent in the relief of pauperism was nearly doubled between 1801 and 1818, and the tax bore very heavily upon the farmers. Indeed in some extreme cases the owners offered to give up their land, it being impossible to cultivate it at a profit under such a heavy poor-tax, and the paupers refused to accept it because "they liked the present system better." The root of the evil was that it was a period of "out-door relief," that is, they were given money with no restraint upon their liberty.

Page 199. *Mant's Bible.*

Richard Mant, an English prelate, published in 1817, in conjunction with D'Oyly, an edition of the Bible with notes, which had a great sale in England.

Page 214. "*Beauty born of murmuring sound.*" This quotation is from Wordsworth's "Three Years She grew in Sun and Shower."

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The Study of the Biography of George Eliot. The biography should be read in connection with the study of such a text as "Silas Marner," chiefly for the purpose of finding out how the author became a writer, how she began to write, from what source she drew the characters and the scenes of the story, and under what circumstances it was written. The results will be more satisfactory if the reading be done with certain definite questions in mind: What education in school did George Eliot receive? What special gain did she make in each of the schools she attended? At what age did she leave school? What books had she read before she left school? How did she continue her education? What did she read in the first five or ten years after she left school? What means of self-discipline did she employ in those years? etc.

In the same manner, the student should learn from George Eliot's biography what the subjects were that occupied her thoughts in her early years, how she gained skill in the art of literary expression, when and how she began to try her powers. Her familiarity with the country in which the scenes of "Silas Marner" are laid, and her intimate knowledge of the life of the people there, should be the subject of another investigation. Location upon the map of the places where her own early life was spent, of the journeys she made, and the schools to which she was sent will throw light upon the subject.

The first volume of the "Life of George Eliot," chapters i.–iv., by J. W. Cross, is the best source of information in the study of the biography of this author. This work is now published in a cheap edition. For the author's account of "How I came to write fiction," and for references to the writing of "Silas Marner," see vol. i. pp. 335, 346; vol. ii. pp. 53–58, 236, 240, 243, 244, 246, 247. The references are to Blackwood's cabinet edition in three volumes, and are dated in the journal and letters, September, 1856; January, 1857; Nov. 16, 1858; Nov. 28, 1860; Jan. 12, 1861; Feb. 1, 1861; Feb. 15, 1861; Feb. 24, 1861.

Instruction in Composition. The analysis of the plot of "Silas Marner" lends itself easily to the purposes of class-room instruction. The pupil may not understand the significance of "theme," "artistic purpose," etc., but when the teacher asks, Why did George Eliot tell us the story of this miser? What did she wish to show us? the meaning is clear, and he will answer most intelligently. Ask the pupil to write a page or two on "How Silas became a miser;" he will read the text with quickened perception. Ask whether he himself has ever known a miser, and let him compare Silas with other misers, either represented in books, or those whom he has known; as a result, the bright boy or girl will distinguish just the qualities of this miser which made a change of character possible. Ask the class to find every change which took place in Silas's way of thinking or acting between the time when he discovered the theft of his gold and the coming of Eppie; the chance is that the list made by the pupils will be more complete than the teacher's own. The child is a natural story-teller, and has an aptitude which may be counted on in studying the growth of a tale from the creative point of view. Further, no topics are so useful in developing skill in composition as those taken from literature. They require attention to the narrative, comparison and arrangement of ideas, and accurate expression. They furnish abundant material, stimulate thought, and at the same time make it impossible for the pupil to borrow his language or his ideas from the book, as is too often the case when he is asked to narrate an episode in his own words, or to reproduce a description.

Instruction in Criticism. It is usually a mistake to attempt to lead young persons to make critical generalizations, but they will readily distinguish particular characteristics; for instance, they will select all the various elements of village life which form the background of "Silas Marner," — the inn, the church the different classes of persons usually living in a small village, which are represented in the story, etc. They can also select the various descriptions of persons in "Silas Marner," and compare them for the purpose of determining which would serve best as a guide for the illustrator. Scenes may also be selected with the same object in view. Thus the high school student may be guided to a real study of the characteristics of this author. If "Silas Marner" is the first novel that has been studied by the pupil, comparison of the characters, scenes, etc.

with those of other books should be avoided. It is essential that the first steps in criticism should be based upon an intimate knowledge of the text under consideration, and no genuine comparison is possible until the student has gained by close study familiarity with at least two texts. No second-hand knowledge should be admissible, for in nothing is the young student so timid and uncertain as in regard to his own opinion. Unless he learns "to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within," it will soon be obscured and lost.

TOPICS FOR STUDY.

PART I.

1. When and where does the plot of "Silas Marner" open?

2. With what incident, condition, or setting did George Eliot begin her narrative?

3. Why is this incident, condition, or setting initial?

4. Would it have answered as well to begin the story with the childhood of Silas instead of going back to that time, after the opening? Give reasons for your opinion.

5. What kind of village was Raveloe? Describe the situation as you imagine it.

6. What did the people of Raveloe *know* about Silas Marner?

7. What did they *think* and *believe* about him?

8. How does the author explain his absent-mindedness and stupidity?

9. Why does the author tell the story of his past life?

10. What points in his past life do you think that the author cared most to have the reader remember?

11. What did Silas care most for when he was a young man?

12. How much education do you think Silas had?

13. Why did Silas stop praying?

14. How do you explain the fact that Silas did not become a miser until after he had reached manhood?

15. Did he really love his gold? Why did he save it?

16. How much money had Silas saved at the time when the story opens?

17. To what does the author compare the life of Silas Marner? Why?

18. At what time in this century is the story of "Silas Marner" placed? How do you prove it?

19. What is the theme, or artistic purpose, of "Silas Marner"?

20. What conditions are essential to the literary expression of this theme?

21. How many persons belonged to the family of Squire Cass?

22. Tell what the neighbors thought of each member of this family.

23. What, in your opinion, was the greatest weakness in the character of Godfrey Cass?

24. What do you consider his best trait of character?

25. Where is the beginning of the underplot of "Silas Marner;" that is, of the story of Godfrey Cass?

NOTE. — Professor W. T. Price, in "The Technique of the Drama," uses "underplot" as a convenient term to denote an action contained within a main plot, yet having a certain independent unity of its own. It is a critical requirement in the best fiction that the underplot be so subordinated to the main plot that it is essential to the action.

26. What traits of Godfrey's character are essential to the action of this plot?

27. Explain how Godfrey came to be so much in the power of his brother.

28. What were the reasons which prevented Godfrey from going to his father and telling him the whole story?

29. What do you think would have happened if Godrey had told his father the truth?

30. If his father had found out the whole story by accident, what would have happened?

31. Explain, in the order in which they came, all the incidents and motives which led Dunstan to steal the miser's money.

32. If Godfrey had found the miser's money on the table in the empty cottage, do you think that he would have taken it?

33. What traits of Godfrey's character are essential to the action of this plot?

34. What results of these traits of character had determining influence upon his later career?

35. What is the relation of the underplot to the main plot at the time when the money was stolen? At the time when Eppie came?

36. Why did Silas go out without locking his door on the night when his money was stolen? What happened to him after his return?

37. How many different occupations were represented among the persons gathered in the Rainbow Inn? Why do you sup-

pose that the author gathered so many different persons at this time?

38. Do you learn anything from the conversation in the inn about any of the characters of whom we have heard before?

39. What was the first effect of the loss of his money upon Silas?

40. What moved Silas to take back his suspicion of Jem?

41. What were the different explanations of the robbery in Raveloe? What were the reasons for each?

42. From how many sources did Godfrey Cass fear trouble at the time of the robbery?

43. Why did no one suspect Dunstan of the robbery?

44. Find every change which took place in the life or the mind of Silas between the time of the robbery and the time when he found the child?

45. What was his mental condition when the child came? How does the author account for this condition?

46. Describe the party at the Red House in such a manner as to compare it with a party at the present time, and show the differences.

47. In the eleventh chapter, George Eliot said that Miss Nancy was not as well informed as a servant-maid at the present time, but that she was a lady. What attributes of a lady did she possess?

48. What differences between Miss Nancy and her sister Priscilla do you find?

49. To how many persons is the reader introduced at the party in the Red House? How many of them had been at the inn on the evening of the robbery?

50. How many traits of Nancy's character do you learn of in this chapter?

51. Explain how Eppie got into the cottage of Silas without his knowledge.

52. In how many ways has the author prepared for the manner of the child's coming? Why do we expect that Silas will take the child and love her?

53. Do you think that Godfrey Cass deserved to slip out of all his troubles so easily? Why did the author protect him from the natural results of his own acts?

54. If Godfrey's wife had lived long enough to reach the Red House and make herself known, what would have happened?

What would Squire Cass have done? What would Godfrey have done? What would have become of the child? Would Godfrey ever have married Nancy? Would he have been a better man or a worse man than in the case as it happened? What would have become of Silas Marner?

55. Find every change which took place in the life or character of Silas Marner after the coming of Eppie. Explain the reason for each as you understand it.

56. At what point does the underplot first come into vital connection with the main plot?

57. What step is decisive in the development of the main plot?

58. Wherein lay the real cause which brought about the theft of Silas's gold?

59. What is the incident of decisive importance in the underplot, in Part I.?

60. Does the underplot become subordinate to the main plot in Part I. so that it is only an episode in the narrative?

PART II.

1. How long a time was occupied by the incidents of Part I.? How long an interval passed between the incidents of Part I. and those of Part II.?

2. Why did the author leave out so many years between the two Parts? Why do we not miss them in reading the story?

3. How does Part II. open? Why? What changes in Silas and in his manner of life may be noted in addition to those given in Part I.?

4. Compare the appearance of Silas Marner in the beginning of Part II. with his appearance at the beginning of the story.

5. What has happened in the lives of Priscilla and Nancy and Godfrey in sixteen years?

6. How has Nancy changed in that time? How has Godfrey changed? What kind of man has he become?

7. Why did the author place the return of the gold just before Mr. Cass offered to adopt Eppie?

8. The next great steps in the plot are the tests of Silas's changed character. What were they?

9. In the incident of the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Cass to the cottage of Silas Marner, what is the important element in the main plot? What is the important element in the underplot?

10. What is the theme, or artistic purpose, of the underplot of "Silas Marner"? How early in the story is this theme apparent?

11. What is the relation of the underplot to the climax of the main plot?

Conclusion of the underplot.

12. What was Godfrey's conclusion about his own life?

13. Where do you place the supreme moment, or climax, of the underplot?

14. What is the final act or conclusion of the underplot?

Conclusion of the main plot.

15. Why is it essential that Eppie's promise of marriage should have been given to Aaron before Squire Cass's offer of adoption?

16. Where do you place the supreme moment, or climax, of the main plot?

17. In what did Silas's reward, the result, consist?

18. What is the final act, or conclusion, of the main plot?

19. Why did the author send Silas Marner back to Lantern Yard? Why did she choose that he should fail in his quest?

20. Why did she place this chapter before the wedding of Aaron and Eppie?

21. What was Silas's final explanation of his old troubles?

22. What is the secret of the interest that the reader feels in the lives of persons wholly outside that part of the community which is called society, and not belonging to any of the cultivated or educated classes?

23. How many elements of village life in Raveloe has George Eliot presented in "Silas Marner"?

24. What quotations that are worth remembering have you found in "Silas Marner"?

NOTE. — Select only such quotations as are complete when severed from the context, and inquire in the case of each why it is worth remembering, — is it for beauty of diction or of sentiment? Is it because the words express some profound truth in such manner as to impress it upon the memory?

25. How many characters has George Eliot used in "Silas Marner"?

26. How many of these are described so that you can imagine their appearance?

BY STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER

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IT'S A STORY THEY TELL IN THE BORDER COUNTRY, where Massachusetts joins Vermont and New Hampshire.

Yes, Dan'l Webster's dead—or, at least, they buried him. But every time there's a thunderstorm around Marshfield, they say you can hear his rolling voice in the hollows of the sky. And they say that if you go to his grave and speak loud and clear, "Dan'l Webster—Dan'l Webster!" the ground'll begin to shiver and the trees begin to shake. And after a while you'll hear a deep voice saying, "Neighbor, how stands the Union?" Then you better answer the Union

stands as she stood, rock-bottomed and copper-sheathed, one and indivisible, or he's liable to rear right out of the ground. At least, that's what I was told when I was a youngster.

You see, for a while, he was the biggest man in the country. He never got to be President, but he was the biggest man. There were thousands that trusted in him right next to God Almighty, and they told stories about him and all the things that belonged to him that were like the stories of patriarchs and such. They said, when he stood up to speak, stars and stripes came right out in the sky, and once he spoke against a river and made it sink into the ground. They said, when he walked the woods with his fishing rod, Killall, the trout would jump out of the streams right into his pockets, for they knew it was no use putting up a fight against him; and, when he argued a case, he could turn on the harps of the blessed and the shaking of the earth

underground. That was the kind of man he was, and his big farm up at Marshfield was suitable to him. The chickens he raised were all white meat down through the drumsticks, the cows were tended like children, and the big ram he called Goliath had horns with a curl like a morning-glory vine and could butt through an iron door. But Dan'l wasn't one of your gentlemen farmers; he knew all the ways of the land, and he'd be up by candlelight to see that the chores got done. A man with a mouth like a mastiff, a brow like a mountain and eyes like burning anthracite—that was Dan'l Webster in his prime. And the biggest case he argued never got written down in the books, for he argued it against the devil, nip and tuck and no holds barred. And this is the way I used to hear it told.

There was a man named Jabez Stone, lived at Cross Corners, New Hampshire. He wasn't a bad man to start with, but he was an unlucky

man. If he planted corn, he got borers; if he planted potatoes, he got blight. He had good-enough land, but it didn't prosper him; he had a decent wife and children, but the more children he had, the less there was to feed them. If stones cropped up in his neighbor's field, boulders boiled up in his; if he had a horse with the spavins, he'd trade it for one with the staggers and give something extra. There's some folks bound to be like that, apparently. But one day Jabez Stone got sick of the whole business.

He'd been plowing that morning and he'd just broke the plowshare on a rock that he could have sworn hadn't been there yesterday. And, as he stood looking at the plowshare, the off horse began to cough—that ropy kind of cough that means sickness and horse doctors. There were two children down with the measles, his wife was ailing, and he had a whitlow on his thumb. It was about the last straw for Jabez Stone. "I

vow," he said, and he looked around him kind of desperate—"I vow it's enough to make a man want to sell his soul to the devil! And I would, too, for two cents!"

Then he felt a kind of queerness come over him at having said what he'd said; though, naturally, being a New Hampshireman, he wouldn't take it back. But, all the same, when it got to be evening and, as far as he could see, no notice had been taken, he felt relieved in his mind, for he was a religious man. But notice is always taken, sooner or later, just like the Good Book says. And, sure enough, next day, about suppertime, a soft-spoken, dark-dressed stranger drove up in a handsome buggy and asked for Jabez Stone.

Well, Jabez told his family it was a lawyer, come to see him about a legacy. But he knew who it was. He didn't like the looks of the stranger, nor the way he smiled with his teeth.

They were white teeth, and plentiful—some say they were filed to a point, but I wouldn't vouch for that. And he didn't like it when the dog took one look at the stranger and ran away howling, with his tail between his legs. But having passed his word, more or less, he stuck to it, and they went out behind the barn and made their bargain. Jabez Stone had to prick his finger to sign, and the stranger lent him a silver pin. The wound healed clean, but it left a little white scar.

AFTER THAT, ALL OF A SUDDEN, THINGS BEGAN TO pick up and prosper for Jabez Stone. His cows got fat and his horses sleek, his crops were the envy of the neighborhood, and lightning might strike all over the valley, but it wouldn't strike his barn. Pretty soon, he was one of the prosperous people of the county; they asked him to stand for selectman, and he stood for it; there began to be talk of running him for state senate. All in all, you might say the Stone family was as happy and contented as cats in a dairy. And so they were, except for Jabez Stone.

He'd been contented enough, the first few years. It's a great thing when bad luck turns; it drives most other things out of your head. True, every now and then, especially in rainy weather, the little white scar on his finger would give him a twinge. And once a year, punctual as clockwork, the stranger with the handsome buggy would come driving by. But the sixth year, the stranger lighted, and, after that, his peace was over for Jabez Stone.

The stranger came up through the lower field, switching his boots with a cane—they were handsome black boots, but Jabez Stone never liked the look of them, particularly the toes. And, after he'd passed the time of day, he said, "Well, Mr. Stone, you're a hummer! It's a very pretty property you've got here, Mr. Stone."

"Well, some might favor it and others might not," said Jabez Stone, for he was a New Hampshireman.

"Oh, no need to decry your industry!" said the stranger, very easy, showing his teeth in a smile. "After all, we know what's been done, and it's been according to contract and specifications. So when—ahem—the mortgage falls due next year, you shouldn't have any regrets."

"Speaking of that mortgage, mister," said Jabez Stone, and he looked around for help to the earth and the sky, "I'm beginning to have one or two doubts about it."

"Doubts?" said the stranger, not quite so pleasantly.

"Why, yes," said Jabez Stone. "This being the U. S. A. and me always having been a religious man." He cleared his throat and got bolder. "Yes, sir," he said, "I'm beginning to have considerable doubts as to that mortgage holding in court."

"There's courts and courts," said the stranger, clicking his teeth. "Still, we might as well have a

look at the original document." And he hauled out a big black pocketbook, full of papers. "Sherwin, Slater, Stevens, Stone," he muttered. "I, Jabez Stone, for a term of seven years—Oh, it's quite in order, I think."

But Jabez Stone wasn't listening, for he saw something else flutter out of the black pocketbook. It was something that looked like a moth, but it wasn't a moth. And as Jabez Stone stared at it, it seemed to speak to him in a small sort of piping voice, terrible small and thin, but terrible human.

"Neighbor Stone!" it squeaked. "Neighbor Stone! Help me! For God's sake, help me!"

But before Jabez Stone could stir hand or foot, the stranger whipped out a big bandanna handkerchief, caught the creature in it, just like a butterfly, and started tying up the ends of the bandanna.

"Sorry for the interruption," he said. "As I was saying—"

But Jabez Stone was shaking all over like a scared horse.

"That's Miser Stevens' voice!" he said, in a croak. "And you've got him in your handkerchief!"

The stranger looked a little embarrassed.

"Yes, I really should have transferred him to the collecting box," he said with a simper, "but there were some rather unusual specimens there and I didn't want them crowded. Well, well, these little contretemps will occur."

"I don't know what you mean by contertan," said Jabez Stone, "but that was Miser Stevens' voice! And he ain't dead! You can't tell me he is! He was just as spry and mean as a woodchuck, Tuesday!"

"In the midst of life—" said the stranger, kind of pious. "Listen!" Then a bell began to toll in

the valley and Jabez Stone listened, with the sweat running down his face. For he knew it was tolled for Miser Stevens and that he was dead.

"These long-standing accounts," said the stranger with a sigh; "one really hates to close them. But business is business."

He still had the bandanna in his hand, and Jabez Stone felt sick as he saw the cloth struggle and flutter.

"Are they all as small as that?" he asked hoarsely.

"Small?" said the stranger. "Oh, I see what you mean. Why, they vary." He measured Jabez Stone with his eyes, and his teeth showed. "Don't worry, Mr. Stone," he said. "You'll go with a very good grade. I wouldn't trust you outside the collecting box. Now, a man like Dan'l Webster, of course—well, we'd have to build a special box for him, and even at that, I

imagine the wing spread would astonish you. He'd certainly be a prize. I wish we could see our way clear to him. But, in your case, as I was saying—"

"Put that handkerchief away!" said Jabez Stone, and he began to beg and to pray. But the best he could get at the end was a three years' extension, with conditions.

But till you make a bargain like that, you've got no idea of how fast four years can run. By the last months of those years, Jabez Stone's known all over the state and there's talk of running him for governor—and it's dust and ashes in his mouth. For every day, when he gets up, he thinks, "There's one more night gone," and every night when he lies down, he thinks of the black pocketbook and the soul of Miser Stevens, and it makes him sick at heart. Till, finally, he can't bear it any longer, and, in the last days of the last year, he hitches up his horse and drives

off to seek Dan'l Webster. For Dan'l was born in New Hampshire, only a few miles from Cross Corners, and it's well known that he has a particular soft spot for old neighbors.

IT WAS EARLY IN THE MORNING WHEN HE GOT TO Marshfield, but Dan'l was up already, talking Latin to the farm hands and wrestling with the ram, Goliath, and trying out a new trotter and working up speeches to make against John C. Calhoun. But when he heard a New Hampshire-man had come to see him, he dropped everything else he was doing, for that was Dan'l's way. He gave Jabez Stone a breakfast that five men couldn't eat, went into the living history of every man and woman in Cross Corners, and finally asked him how he could serve him.

Jabez Stone allowed that it was a kind of mortgage case.

"Well, I haven't pleaded a mortgage case in a long time, and I don't generally plead now, except before the Supreme Court," said Dan'l, "but if I can, I'll help you."

"Then I've got hope for the first time in ten years," said Jabez Stone, and told him the details.

Dan'l walked up and down as he listened, hands behind his back, now and then asking a question, now and then plunging his eyes at the floor, as if they'd bore through it like gimlets. When Jabez Stone had finished, Dan'l puffed out his cheeks and blew. Then he turned to Jabez Stone and a smile broke over his face like the sunrise over Monadnock.

"You've certainly given yourself the devil's own row to hoe, Neighbor Stone," he said, "but I'll take your case."

"You'll take it?" said Jabez Stone, hardly daring to believe.

"Yes," said Dan'l Webster. "I've got about seventy-five other things to do and the Missouri Compromise to straighten out, but I'll take your case. For if two New Hampshiremen aren't a match for the devil, we might as well give the country back to the Indians."

Then he shook Jabez Stone by the hand and said, "Did you come down here in a hurry?"

"Well, I admit I made time," said Jabez Stone.

"You'll go back faster," said Dan'l Webster, and he told 'em to hitch up Constitution and Constellation to the carriage. They were matched grays with one white forefoot, and they stepped like greased lightning.

Well, I won't describe how excited and pleased the whole Stone family was to have the great Dan'l Webster for a guest, when they finally got

there. Jabez Stone had lost his hat on the way, blown off when they overtook a wind, but he didn't take much account of that. But after supper he sent the family off to bed, for he had most particular business with Mr. Webster. Mrs. Stone wanted them to sit in the front parlor, but Dan'l Webster knew front parlors and said he preferred the kitchen. So it was there they sat, waiting for the stranger, with a jug on the table between them and a bright fire on the hearth—the stranger being scheduled to show up on the stroke of midnight, according to specification.

Well, most men wouldn't have asked for better company than Dan'l Webster and a jug. But with every tick of the clock Jabez Stone got sadder and sadder. His eyes roved round, and though he sampled the jug you could see he couldn't taste it. Finally, on the stroke of 11:30 he reached over and grabbed Dan'l Webster by the arm.

"Mr. Webster, Mr. Webster!" he said, and his voice was shaking with fear and a desperate courage. "For God's sake, Mr. Webster, harness your horses and get away from this place while you can!"

"You've brought me a long way, neighbor, to tell me you don't like my company," said Dan'l Webster, quite peaceable, pulling at the jug.

"Miserable wretch that I am!" groaned Jabez Stone. "I've brought you a devilish way, and now I see my folly. Let him take me if he wills. I don't hanker after it, I must say, but I can stand it. But you're the Union's stay and New Hampshire's pride! He mustn't get you, Mr. Webster! He mustn't get you!"

Dan'l Webster looked at the distracted man, all gray and shaking in the firelight, and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"I'm obliged to you, Neighbor Stone," he said gently. "It's kindly thought of. But there's a jug

on the table and a case in hand. And I never left a jug or a case half finished in my life."

And just at that moment there was a sharp rap on the door.

"Ah," said Dan'l Webster, very coolly, "I thought your clock was a trifle slow, Neighbor Stone." He stepped to the door and opened it. "Come in!" he said.

The stranger came in—very dark and tall he looked in the firelight. He was carrying a box under his arm—a black, japanned box with little air holes in the lid. At the sight of the box, Jabez Stone gave a low cry and shrank into a corner of the room.

"Mr. Webster, I presume," said the stranger, very polite, but with his eyes glowing like a fox's deep in the woods.

"Attorney of record for Jabez Stone," said Dan'l Webster, but his eyes were glowing too. "Might I ask your name?"

"I've gone by a good many," said the stranger carelessly. "Perhaps Scratch will do for the evening. I'm often called that in these regions."

Then he sat down at the table and poured himself a drink from the jug. The liquor was cold in the jug, but it came steaming into the glass.

"And now," said the stranger, smiling and showing his teeth, "I shall call upon you, as a law-abiding citizen, to assist me in taking possession of my property."

Well, with that the argument began—and it went hot and heavy. At first, Jabez Stone had a flicker of hope, but when he saw Dan'l Webster being forced back at point after point, he just sat scrunched in his corner, with his eyes on that japanned box. For there wasn't any doubt as to the deed or the signature—that was the worst of it. Dan'l Webster twisted and turned and thumped his fist on the table, but he couldn't get away from that. He offered to compromise

the case; the stranger wouldn't hear of it. He pointed out the property had increased in value, and state senators ought to be worth more; the stranger stuck to the letter of the law. He was a great lawyer, Dan'l Webster, but we know who's the King of Lawyers, as the Good Book tells us, and it seemed as if, for the first time, Dan'l Webster had met his match.

Finally, the stranger yawned a little. "Your spirited efforts on behalf of your client do you credit, Mr. Webster," he said, "but if you have no more arguments to adduce, I'm rather pressed for time—" and Jabez Stone shuddered.

Dan'l Webster's brow looked dark as a thundercloud. "Pressed or not, you shall not have this man!" he thundered. "Mr. Stone is an American citizen, and no American citizen may be forced into the service of a foreign prince. We fought England for that in '12 and we'll fight all hell for it again!"

"Foreign?" said the stranger. "And who calls me a foreigner?"

"Well, I never yet heard of the dev—of your claiming American citizenship," said Dan'l Webster with surprise.

"And who with better right?" said the stranger, with one of his terrible smiles. "When the first wrong was done to the first Indian, I was there. When the first slaver put out for the Congo, I stood on her deck. Am I not in your books and stories and beliefs, from the first settlements on? Am I not spoken of, still, in every church in New England? 'Tis true the North claims me for a Southerner, and the South for a Northerner, but I am neither. I am merely an honest American like yourself—and of the best descent—for, to tell the truth, Mr. Webster, though I don't like to boast of it, my name is older in this country than yours."

"Aha!" said Dan'l Webster, with the veins

standing out in his forehead. "Then I stand on the Constitution! I demand a trial for my client!"

"The case is hardly one for an ordinary court," said the stranger, his eyes flickering. "And, indeed, the lateness of the hour—"

"Let it be any court you choose, so it is an American judge and an American jury!" said Dan'l Webster in his pride. "Let it be the quick or the dead; I'll abide the issue!"

"You have said it," said the stranger, and pointed his finger at the door. And with that, and all of a sudden, there was a rushing of wind outside and a noise of footsteps. They came, clear and distinct, through the night. And yet, they were not like the footsteps of living men.

"In God's name, who comes by so late?" cried Jabez Stone, in an ague of fear.

"The jury Mr. Webster demands," said the stranger, sipping at his boiling glass. "You must pardon the rough appearance of one or two; they will have come a long way."

AND WITH THAT THE FIRE BURNED BLUE AND THE door blew open and twelve men entered, one by one.

If Jabez Stone had been sick with terror before, he was blind with terror now. For there was Walter Butler, the loyalist, who spread fire and horror through the Mohawk Valley in the times of the Revolution; and there was Simon Girty, the renegade, who saw white men burned at the stake and whooped with the Indians to see them burn. His eyes were green, like a catamount's, and the stains on his hunting shirt did

not come from the blood of the deer. King Philip was there, wild and proud as he had been in life, with the great gash in his head that gave him his death wound, and cruel Governor Dale, who broke men on the wheel. There was Morton of Merry Mount, who so vexed the Plymouth Colony, with his flushed, loose, handsome face and his hate of the godly. There was Teach, the bloody pirate, with his black beard curling on his breast. The Reverend John Smeet, with his strangler's hands and his Geneva gown, walked as daintily as he had to the gallows. The red print of the rope was still around his neck, but he carried a perfumed handkerchief in one hand. One and all, they came into the room with the fires of hell still upon them, and the stranger named their names and their deeds as they came, till the tale of twelve was told. Yet the stranger had told the truth—they had all played a part in America.

"Are you satisfied with the jury, Mr. Webster?" said the stranger mockingly, when they had taken their places.

The sweat stood upon Dan'l Webster's brow, but his voice was clear.

"Quite satisfied," he said. "Though I miss General Arnold from the company."

"Benedict Arnold is engaged upon other business," said the stranger, with a glower. "Ah, you asked for a justice, I believe."

He pointed his finger once more, and a tall man, soberly clad in Puritan garb, with the burning gaze of the fanatic, stalked into the room and took his judge's place.

"Justice Hathorne is a jurist of experience," said the stranger. "He presided at certain witch trials once held in Salem. There were others who repented of the business later, but not he."

"Repent of such notable wonders and undertakings?" said the stern old justice. "Nay, hang

them—hang them all!" And he muttered to himself in a way that struck ice into the soul of Jabez Stone.

Then the trial began, and, as you might expect, it didn't look anyways good for the defense. And Jabez Stone didn't make much of a witness in his own behalf. He took one look at Simon Girty and screeched, and they had to put him back in his corner in a kind of swoon.

It didn't halt the trial, though; the trial went on, as trials do. Dan'l Webster had faced some hard juries and hanging judges in his time, but this was the hardest he'd ever faced, and he knew it. They sat there with a kind of glitter in their eyes, and the stranger's smooth voice went on and on. Every time he'd raise an objection, it'd be "Objection sustained," but whenever Dan'l objected, it'd be "Objection denied." Well, you couldn't expect fair play from a fellow like this Mr. Scratch.

It got to Dan'l in the end, and he began to heat, like iron in the forge. When he got up to speak he was going to flay that stranger with every trick known to the law, and the judge and jury too. He didn't care if it was contempt of court or what would happen to him for it. He didn't care any more what happened to Jabez Stone. He just got madder and madder, thinking of what he'd say. And yet, curiously enough, the more he thought about it, the less he was able to arrange his speech in his mind.

Till, finally, it was time for him to get up on his feet, and he did so, all ready to bust out with lightnings and denunciations. But before he started he looked over the judge and jury for a moment, such being his custom. And he noticed the glitter in their eyes was twice as strong as before, and they all leaned forward. Like hounds just before they get the fox, they looked, and the blue mist of evil in the room thickened as

he watched them. Then he saw what he'd been about to do, and he wiped his forehead, as a man might who's just escaped falling into a pit in the dark.

For it was him they'd come for, not only Jabez Stone. He read it in the glitter of their eyes and in the way the stranger hid his mouth with one hand. And if he fought them with their own weapons, he'd fall into their power; he knew that, though he couldn't have told you how. It was his own anger and horror that burned in their eyes; and he'd have to wipe that out or the case was lost. He stood there for a moment, his black eyes burning like anthracite. And then he began to speak.

He started off in a low voice, though you could hear every word. They say he could call on the harps of the blessed when he chose. And this was just as simple and easy as a man could talk. But he didn't start out by condemning or revil-

ing. He was talking about the things that make a country a country, and a man a man.

And he began with the simple things that everybody's known and felt—the freshness of a fine morning when you're young, and the taste of food when you're hungry, and the new day that's every day when you're a child. He took them up and he turned them in his hands. They were good things for any man. But without freedom, they sickened. And when he talked of those enslaved, and the sorrows of slavery, his voice got like a big bell. He talked of the early days of America and the men who had made those days. It wasn't a spread-eagle speech, but he made you see it. He admitted all the wrong that had ever been done. But he showed how, out of the wrong and the right, the suffering and the starvations, something new had come. And everybody had played a part in it, even the traitors.

Then he turned to Jabez Stone and showed

him as he was—an ordinary man who'd had hard luck and wanted to change it. And, because he'd wanted to change it, now he was going to be punished for all eternity. And yet there was good in Jabez Stone, and he showed that good. He was hard and mean, in some ways, but he was a man. There was sadness in being a man, but it was a proud thing too. And he showed what the pride of it was till you couldn't help feeling it. Yes, even in hell, if a man was a man, you'd know it. And he wasn't pleading for any one person any more, though his voice rang like an organ. He was telling the story and the failures and the endless journey of mankind. They got tricked and trapped and bamboozled, but it was a great journey. And no demon that was ever foaled could know the inwardness of it—it took a man to do that.

THE FIRE BEGAN TO DIE ON THE HEARTH AND THE wind before morning to blow. The light was getting gray in the room when Dan'l Webster finished. And his words came back at the end to New Hampshire ground, and the one spot of land that each man loves and clings to. He painted a picture of that, and to each one of that jury he spoke of things long forgotten. For his voice could search the heart, and that was his gift and his strength. And to one, his voice was like the forest and its secrecy, and to another like the sea and the storms of the sea; and one heard the cry of his lost nation in it, and another

saw a little harmless scene he hadn't remembered for years. But each saw something. And when Dan'l Webster finished he didn't know whether or not he'd saved Jabez Stone. But he knew he'd done a miracle. For the glitter was gone from the eyes of judge and jury, and, for the moment, they were men again, and knew they were men.

"The defense rests," said Dan'l Webster, and stood there like a mountain. His ears were still ringing with his speech, and he didn't hear anything else till he heard Judge Hathorne say, "The jury will retire to consider its verdict."

Walter Butler rose in his place and his face had a dark, gay pride on it.

"The jury has considered its verdict," he said, and looked the stranger full in the eye. "We find for the defendant, Jabez Stone."

With that, the smile left the stranger's face, but Walter Butler did not flinch.

"Perhaps 'tis not strictly in accordance with the evidence," he said, "but even the damned may salute the eloquence of Mr. Webster."

With that, the long crow of a rooster split the gray morning sky, and judge and jury were gone from the room like a puff of smoke and as if they had never been there. The stranger turned to Dan'l Webster, smiling wryly. "Major Butler was always a bold man," he said. "I had not thought him quite so bold. Nevertheless, my congratulations, as between two gentlemen."

"I'll have that paper first, if you please," said Dan'l Webster, and he took it and tore it into four pieces. It was queerly warm to the touch. "And now," he said, "I'll have you!" and his hand came down like a bear trap on the stranger's arm. For he knew that once you bested anybody like Mr. Scratch in fair fight, his power on you was gone. And he could see that Mr. Scratch knew it too.

The stranger twisted and wriggled, but he couldn't get out of that grip. "Come, come, Mr. Webster," he said, smiling palely. "This sort of thing is ridic—ouch!—is ridiculous. If you're worried about the costs of the case, naturally, I'd be glad to pay—"

"And so you shall!" said Dan'l Webster, shaking him till his teeth rattled. "For you'll sit right down at that table and draw up a document, promising never to bother Jabez Stone nor his heirs or assigns nor any other New Hampshireman till doomsday! For any hades we want to raise in this state, we can raise ourselves, without assistance from strangers."

"Ouch!" said the stranger. "Ouch! Well, they never did run very big to the barrel, but—ouch! —I agree!"

So he sat down and drew up the document. But Dan'l Webster kept his hand on his coat collar all the time.

"And, now, may I go?" said the stranger, quite humble, when Dan'l'd seen the document was in proper and legal form.

"Go?" said Dan'l, giving him another shake. "I'm still trying to figure out what I'll do with you. For you've settled the costs of the case, but you haven't settled with me. I think I'll take you back to Marshfield," he said, kind of reflective. "I've got a ram there named Goliath that can butt through an iron door. I'd kind of like to turn you loose in his field and see what he'd do."

Well, with that the stranger began to beg and to plead. And he begged and he pled so humble that finally Dan'l, who was naturally kind-hearted, agreed to let him go. The stranger seemed terrible grateful for that and said, just to show they were friends, he'd tell Dan'l's fortune before leaving. So Dan'l agreed to that, though he didn't take much stock in fortune-tellers ordinarily.

But, naturally, the stranger was a little different. Well, he pried and he peered at the lines in Dan'l's hands. And he told him one thing and another that was quite remarkable. But they were all in the past.

"Yes, all that's true, and it happened," said Dan'l Webster. "But what's to come in the future?"

The stranger grinned, kind of happily, and shook his head. "The future's not as you think it," he said. "It's dark. You have a great ambition, Mr. Webster."

"I have," said Dan'l firmly, for everybody knew he wanted to be President.

"It seems almost within your grasp," said the stranger, "but you will not attain it. Lesser men will be made President and you will be passed over."

"And, if I am, I'll still be Daniel Webster," said Dan'l. "Say on."

"You have two strong sons," said the stranger, shaking his head. "You look to found a line. But each will die in war and neither reach greatness."

"Live or die, they are still my sons," said Dan'l Webster. "Say on."

"You have made great speeches," said the stranger. "You will make more."

"Ah," said Dan'l Webster.

"But the last great speech you make will turn many of your own against you," said the stranger. "They will call you Ichabod; they will call you by other names. Even in New England some will say you have turned your coat and sold your country, and their voices will be loud against you till you die."

"So it is an honest speech, it does not matter what men say," said Dan'l Webster. Then he looked at the stranger and their glances locked.

"One question," he said. "I have fought for

the Union all my life. Will I see that fight won against those who would tear it apart?"

"Not while you live," said the stranger, grimly, "but it will be won. And after you are dead, there are thousands who will fight for your cause, because of words that you spoke."

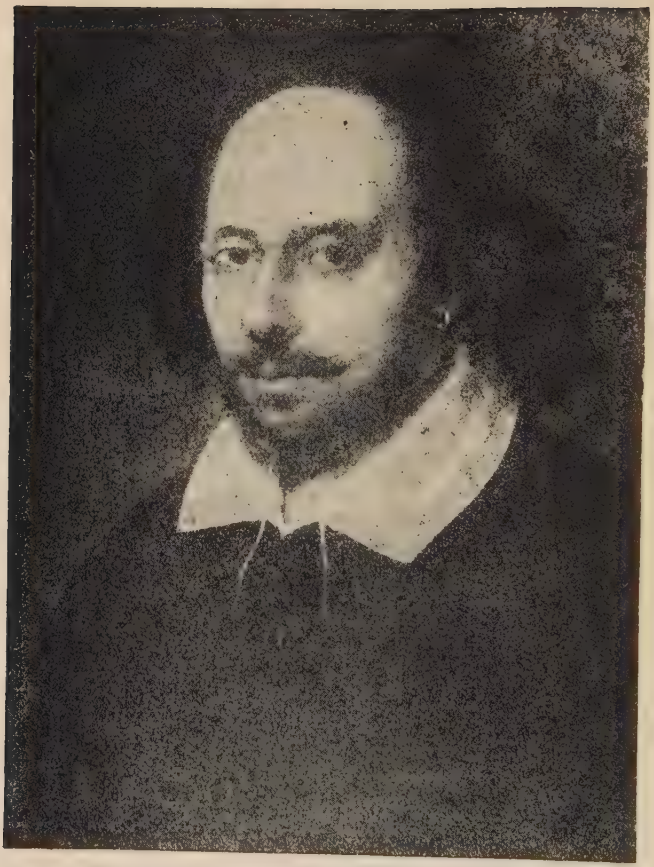
"Why, then, you long-barreled, slab-sided, lantern-jawed, fortune-telling note shaver!" said Dan'l Webster, with a great roar of laughter, "be off with you to your own place before I put my mark on you! For, by the thirteen original colonies, I'd go to the Pit itself to save the Union!"

And with that he drew back his foot for a kick that would have stunned a horse. It was only the tip of his shoe that caught the stranger, but he went flying out of the door with his collecting box under his arm.

"And now," said Dan'l Webster, seeing Jabez Stone beginning to rouse from his swoon, "let's see what's left in the jug, for it's dry work talk-

ing all night. I hope there's pie for breakfast, Neighbor Stone."

But they say that whenever the devil comes near Marshfield, even now, he gives it a wide berth. And he hasn't been seen in the state of New Hampshire from that day to this. I'm not talking about Massachusetts or Vermont.



THE CHANDOS PORTRAIT OF SHAKESPEARE

The Riverside Literature Series

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

BY

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE DUKE OF VENICE.
THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO, } suitors to Portia.
THE PRINCE OF ARRAGON, }
ANTONIO, a merchant of Venice.
BASSANIO, his friend, suitor to Portia.
SALANIO, }
SALARINO, }
GRATIANO, } friends to Antonio and Bassanio.
SALERIO, }
LORENZO, in love with Jessica.
SHYLOCK, a rich Jew.
TUBAL, a Jew, his friend.
LAUNCELOT GOBBO, a clown, servant to Shylock.
OLD GOBBO, father to Launcelot.
LEONARDO, servant to Bassanio.
BALTHASAR, } servants to Portia.
STEPHANO, }
PORTIA, a rich heiress.
NERISSA, her waiting-gentlewoman.
JESSICA, daughter to Shylock.

Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Gaoler, Servants to Portia, and other attendants.

SCENE: *Partly at Venice and partly at Belmont, the seat of Portia.*

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

ACT I

SCENE I. *Venice. A street.*

Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, *and* SALANIO.

ANT. In sooth, I know not why I am so sad.
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado to know myself.
SALAR. Your mind is tossing on the ocean,
There, where your argosies with portly sail,
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.
SALAN. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,
The better part of my affections would

3. *caught it, found it, or came by it.* The three phrases are not mere repetition, but show how Antonio has already turned his sadness over and over in his mind, seeking to account for it.

5. *am to learn*: Elizabethan for "I still have to learn."

7. *much ado to know myself*: irritated, chagrined by his mood.

9. *argosies*: ships. What is your association with the word? The picture in the following lines is a paintable one.

10. *signiors, burghers*: Italian and German words to express "lords" and "rich merchants." Such words Shakespeare heard current in the streets of Renaissance London.

11. *pageants.* Connect this word with the pageants of the guilds.

Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass to know where sits the wind,
Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads;
And every object that might make me fear
Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
Would make me sad.

SALAR. My wind cooling my broth
Would blow me to an ague when I thought
What harm a wind too great at sea might do.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which, touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And, in a word, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanc'd would make me sad?
But tell not me; I know Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

ANT. Believe me, no. I thank my fortune for it,

17. *still*: always.

18. *Plucking the grass*: holding up a spear of grass to catch the wind.

19. *piers and roads*: harbors and safe channels.

20. *every object*. This is the cue for Salarino's list of objects in his next speech — the wind, sand, stones.

22. *My wind*, etc. These lines invite expressive gestures, up to the climax "and now worth nothing."

27. *Andrew*. Andrea Doria was a great admiral of Genoa, and from him great merchant ships were often called "Andrews."

28. *Vailing her high-top*. What position of the ship is pictured?

My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

SALAR. Why, then you are in love.

ANT. Fie, fie!

SALAR. Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad,
Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath fram'd strange fellows in her time;
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper,
And other of such vinegar aspect
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, *and* GRATIANO.

SALAN. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,
Gratiano, and Lorenzo. Fare ye well;
We leave you now with better company.

SALAR. I would have stay'd till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented me.

ANT. Your worth is very dear in my regard.

47. *Then let us say.* Salarino's laughing conclusion accords perfectly with Antonio's opening speech; so Shakespeare keeps the mood consistent through the scene.

50. *two-headed Janus.* What is the classic allusion? and why is it an appropriate oath here?

56. *Nestor.* How does the classic allusion fit here?

61. *prevented.* What is the meaning of this word from its Latin derivation?

62. *Your worth.* This speech shows Antonio's unfailing courtesy. Does this gentle side of his nature contribute to the tragedy of his situation?

I take it, your own business calls on you
And you embrace the occasion to depart.

SALAR. Good morrow, my good lords.

BASS. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? Say, when?
You grow exceeding strange. Must it be so?

SALAR. We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

[*Exeunt Salarino and Salanio.*

LOR. My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,
We two will leave you; but at dinner-time,
I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.

BASS. I will not fail you.

GRA. You look not well, Signior Antonio;
You have too much respect upon the world.
They lose it that do buy it with much care.
Believe me, you are marvellously chang'd.

ANT. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano,
A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.

GRA. Let me play the fool!
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster,

67. *grow exceeding strange.* We should say, "You are great strangers these days."

74. *respect*: regard for. Again Shakespeare uses the word in its literal Latin meaning.

77. *I hold the world.* Does this speech make you impatient with Antonio? Do you think his temperament attracts unhappiness? Is Gratiano's reply tinged with some irritation? Is it natural to feel irritated when trying to shake a friend out of a mood of melancholy?

82. *mortifying.* Here again the literal Latin meaning.

84. *grandsire cut in alabaster.* Such death masks were common in the old English churches.

Sleep when he wakes, and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio —
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks —
There are a sort of men whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,
And do a wilful stillness entertain,
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
As who should say, "I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!"
O my Antonio, I do know of those
That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing, when, I am very sure,
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.
I'll tell thee more of this another time;
But fish not with this melancholy bait
For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.
Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile;
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

LOR. Well, we will leave you then till dinner-time.
I must be one of these same dumb wise men,
For Gratiano never lets me speak.

GRA. Well, keep me company but two years moe,
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

89. *mantle.* The use of this word as a verb is infrequent in modern English, but the meaning is clear.

91. *to be dress'd*, etc. Express the passage in simple prose.

92. *conceit.* Look up the original meaning of this word, which is Shakespeare's use here.

93. "*I am Sir Oracle.*" Gratiano has an excellent chance throughout this speech to do a bit of amusing acting.

98. *would almost damn those ears.* Unravel these complicated lines and express them in simple prose.

102. *gudgeon.* Why is this the best possible metaphor to express something worthless?

ANT. Farewell! I'll grow a talker for this gear.

GRA. Thanks, i'faith, for silence is only commendable
In a neat's tongue dri'd and a maid not vendible.

[*Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo.*

ANT. Is that any thing now?

BASS. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff; you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search.

ANT. Well, tell me now what lady is the same
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,
That you to-day promis'd to tell me of?

BASS. 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate
By something showing a more swelling port
Than my faint means would grant continuance.
Nor do I now make moan to be abridg'd
From such a noble rate; but my chief care
Is to come fairly off from the great debts
Wherein my time something too prodigal

110. *for this gear.* What does this mean in simple English?

114. *Gratiano speaks*, etc. A perfect characterization of a talker of Gratiano's stamp. These young men are as witty and keen as any of Shakespeare's characters, and their talk is doubtless typical of the quickness of the young London wits whom Shakespeare knew.

119. *what lady is the same.* Shakespeare turns the conversation to a new subject just as we are tiring of Antonio's sadness. This starts the second thread of interest, and connects at once with all that follows in Scene II.

122. *'Tis not unknown to you*, etc. Is this the typical approach of a man who has a favor to ask of a friend?

124. *more swelling port*: more pretentious appearance than I could keep up.

126. *make moan*: cry because I must curtail my expenses.

128. *come fairly off.* This honorable touch keeps us in sympathy with the spendthrift.

Hath left me gag'd. To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money and in love,
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburden all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.
ANT. I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honour, be assur'd,
My purse, my person, my extremest means,
Lie all unlock'd to your occasions.
BASS. In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight
The self-same way with more advised watch
To find the other forth, and by adventuring both
I oft found both. I urge this childhood proof,
Because what follows is pure innocence.
I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,
That which I owe is lost; but if you please
To shoot another arrow that self way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I will watch the aim, or to find both
Or bring your latter hazard back again
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.
ANT. You know me well, and herein spend but time
To wind about my love with circumstance;
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost

138. *my extremest means.* This ready generosity becomes significant for dramatic effect when coupled with Antonio's presentiment of coming loss.

140. *In my school-days.* Just what does this speech about the arrow mean? Have you ever done the same to find a lost tennis ball?

145. *innocence*: foolishness.

150. *or to find . . . or bring.* Or, or is equivalent to either, or.

154. *circumstance*: argument and proof.

Than if you had made waste of all I have.
Then do but say to me what I should do
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am prest unto it; therefore, speak.
BASS. In Belmont is a lady richly left;
And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages.
Her name is Portia, nothing undervalu'd
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia.
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors; and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece,
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.
O my Antonio, had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift,
That I should questionless be fortunate!
ANT. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
Neither have I money nor commodity
To raise a present sum. Therefore go forth;
Try what my credit can in Venice do.

160. *prest.* Look up the old meaning of this word. It does not mean "pressed."

161. *In Belmont,* etc. The richness of this speech makes a strong and appealing entrance for the romantic theme of the play.

166. *Brutus' Portia.* What qualities of hers would Bassanio claim for his love?

171. *Colchos' strand.* Do you think Bassanio's comparison a happy one?

180. *Try what my credit,* etc. This direction of Antonio's, so inconspicuous because it is so perfectly natural, becomes in its results the most important speech, for plot purposes, in the first scene. Is it wise to place it, accordingly, so near the end of the scene?

That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
Where money is; and I no question make
To have it of my trust or for my sake. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house.*

Enter PORTIA *with her waiting-woman,* NERISSA.

POR. By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.

NER. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are; and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing. It is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean. Superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer.

POR. Good sentences and well pronounc'd. 10

NER. They would be better, if well followed.

POR. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions; I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than to be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree; such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of

1. *Nerissa.* It has been suggested that, since Bassanio has already told us of Portia's "sunny locks," her companion is, for picturesque contrast, named, from the Italian *nero*, black, "the lady of the raven locks."

1. *little body.* Portia is surely not small; this is probably her amused self-pity, as we say, "Poor little me!"

7. *mean happiness . . . in the mean.* Puns were common in Elizabethan speech. Find other examples in this scene.

good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word choose! I may neither choose who I would nor refuse who I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curb'd by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

NER. Your father was ever virtuous, and holy men at their death have good inspirations; therefore the lottery that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead, whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you, will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who you shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

POR. I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.

NER. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

POR. Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself.

NER. Then there is the County Palatine.

POR. He doth nothing but frown, as who should say, "If you will not have me, choose." He hears merry tales and smiles not. I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

36. *level at*: judge of.

41. *County Palatine*: a noble who was allowed by his king to have royal authority within his own county.

44. *weeping philosopher*: Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher who wept over men's faults, while his opposite, Democritus, laughed at them.

47. *death's-head*: such as Shakespeare saw in old English churches. See Scene 1, l. 84.

NER. How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?

POR. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker; but, he! why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine. He is every man in no man. If a throstle sing, he falls straight a capering. He will fence with his own shadow. If I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me, I would forgive him, for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

NER. What say you, then, to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?

POR. You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him. He hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English. He is a proper man's picture, but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show? How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere.

NER. What think you of the Scottish lord his neighbour?

POR. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him, for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman and swore he would pay him again when he was able. I think the Frenchman became his surety and seal'd under for another.

NER. How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew?

POR. Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober, and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk. When he is best, he is a little worse than a man, and when

72. *the Frenchman became his surety.* How would you explain this from what you know of the relations of Scotland, England, and France in Elizabeth's reign?

he is worst, he is little better than a beast. An the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

NER. If he should offer to choose, and choose the right casket, you should refuse to perform your father's will, if you should refuse to accept him.

POR. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee, set a deep glass of rhenish wine on the contrary casket, for if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I'll be married to a sponge.

NER. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords. They have acquainted me with their determinations; which is, indeed, to return to their home and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition depending on the caskets.

POR. If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence, and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

NER. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?

POR. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio, — as I think, he was so call'd.

95. *imposition depending.* The literal Latin meaning is used here. Is Shakespeare's "little Latin" a trouble to you as you read, or are you glad to have enough yourself to understand him?

97. *Sibylla.* Any one of the sibyls could be taken as symbolic of old age by one as young as Portia.

98. *Diana.* Is it not worth while also to know enough mythology to understand the poets, without being tied to a classical dictionary?

106. *as I think.* How do you explain this hesitation?

NER. True, madam. He, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes look'd upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

POR. I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

Enter a SERVING-MAN.

How now! what news?

SERV. The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave; and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the Prince his master will be here to-night.

POR. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach. If he had the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.

While we shut the gates upon one wooer, another knocks at the door. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *Venice. A public place.*

Enter BASSANIO *and* SHYLOCK *the Jew.*

SHY. Three thousand ducats; well.

BASS. Ay, sir, for three months.

SHY. For three months; well.

BASS. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

SHY. Antonio shall become bound; well.

115. *a forerunner.* The usual way is here employed to sustain our interest, and link this scene with one that is to follow in Act II. This is the simplest way of giving unity to varied scenes, and to carry forward easily the threads of the plot.

1. *Well.* This word, thrice repeated, shows Shylock's careful business consideration. Does it also mean that his plot is slowly beginning to form in his mind?

BASS. May you stead me? Will you pleasure me? Shall I know your answer?

SHY. Three thousand ducats for three months, and Antonio bound.

BASS. Your answer to that.

SHY. Antonio is a good man.

BASS. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

SHY. Ho, no, no, no, no! My meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath, squand'red abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men; there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates, and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats; I think I may take his bond.

BASS. Be assured you may.

SHY. I will be assured I may; and, that I may be assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

BASS. If it please you to dine with us.

SHY. Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk

11. *good*: financially sound.

15. *in supposition*: speculative, depending upon safe voyages. Note how Shakespeare has sent Antonio's ships to the richest ports known to the Elizabethans.

19. *squand'red*: scattered. Possibly also Shylock intimates that shipping was a risk not to be taken lightly. All the possible disasters he enumerates serve to feed his idea of the bond.

30. *the Nazarite conjured the devil into*. Find the story in the New Testament.

31. *I will buy with you*, etc. This distinction of Shylock was genuine Jewish consistency.

with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?

Enter ANTONIO.

BASS. This is Signior Antonio.

SHY. [*Aside.*] How like a fawning publican he looks!
I hate him for he is a Christian,
But more for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis, and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,
Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe,
If I forgive him!

BASS. Shylock, do you hear?

SHY. I am debating of my present store,
And, by the near guess of my memory,
I cannot instantly raise up the gross
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me. But soft! how many months

35. *This is Signior Antonio.* This immediate appearance of the subject of conversation is a familiar stage convention.

37. *I hate him,* etc. Note the order of the causes of Shylock's hatred: without counting first upon the religious hatred of the ages, Shakespeare could hardly give us justifiable causes for Shylock's bond. Show why each of the three causes is a stimulating one.

41. *upon the hip.* A wrestler with his enemy in this position can easily throw him.

52. *Tubal . . . will furnish me.* Why does the bond become doubly dangerous if Shylock borrows the money?

Do you desire? [*To Ant.*] Rest you fair, good signior;
Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

ANT. Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow
By taking nor by giving of excess;
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
I'll break a custom. Is he yet possess'd
How much ye would?

SHY. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

ANT. And for three months.

SHY. I had forgot; three months; you told me so.
Well then, your bond; and let me see; — but hear you;
Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow
Upon advantage.

ANT. I do never use it.

SHY. When Jacob graz'd his uncle Laban's sheep —
This Jacob from our holy Abram was,
As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,
The third possessor; ay, he was the third —

ANT. And what of him? Did he take interest?

SHY. No, not take interest, not, as you would say.
Directly interest. Mark what Jacob did.
When Laban and himself were compromis'd
That all the eanlings which were streak'd and pied
Should fall as Jacob's hire,
The skilful shepherd pill'd me certain wands.
He stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,

62. *I had forgot.* Had he?

66. *When Jacob*, etc. The story is in the Old Testament. Is there not something poetic and pathetic in the way in which his mind wings back to the East?

76. *pill'd*: pealed.

Who then conceiving did in eaning time
Fall parti-colour'd lambs, and those were Jacob's.
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest;
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

ANT. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob serv'd for;
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of Heaven.
Was this inserted to make interest good?
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

SHY. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast.
But note me, signior.

ANT. Mark you this, Bassanio,
The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
An evil soul producing holy witness
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
A goodly apple rotten at the heart.
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

SHY. Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round sum.
Three months from twelve; then, let me see; the rate —

ANT. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

SHY. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usances.
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.

85. *inserted*: included in Holy Writ.

88. *Mark you this.* Why does Shylock not hear this speech?

97. *Signior Antonio, many a time and oft.* In this speech, which lines call forth contempt for Shylock, and which stir your sympathy? Can you picture his gestures as he speaks?

98. *Rialto*: the chief money mart of Venice. One cannot stand there to-day without seeing, in imagination, these characters of Shakespeare's against the background of the graceful mediæval Rialto bridge, the light-flecked waters of the Grand Canal, and the shifting colors of the Italian crowd crossing and recrossing the busiest mart in all Venice.

You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help.
Go to, then! You come to me, and you say,
"Shylock, we would have moneys;" you say so —
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold; moneys is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I not say,
"Hath a dog money? Is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?" Or
Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,
With bated breath and whispering humbleness,
Say this:
"Fair sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last;
You spurn'd me such a day; another time
You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much moneys"?

ANT. I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends; for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal of his friend?
But lend it rather to thine enemy,
Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face
Exact the penalty.

SHY. Why, look you, how you storm!
I would be friends with you and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,

121. *I am as like.* Do you like Antonio's spirit here? Has his first mood of melancholy departed? For what dramatic purpose is Antonio presented as so sure of redeeming his bond? If his ships come back on time what satisfaction would Shylock have? Then, do you think the bond was, at first, made in "merry sport"?

Supply your present wants, and take no doit
Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me.
This is kind I offer.

BASS. This were kindness.

SHY. This kindness will I show.
Go with me to a notary, seal me there
Your single bond; and, in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,
In such a place, such sum or sums as are
Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.

ANT. Content, i'faith, I'll seal to such a bond,
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

BASS. You shall not seal to such a bond for me;
I'll rather dwell in my necessity.

ANT. Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it.
Within these two months, that's a month before
This bond expires, I do expect return
Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

SHY. O father Abram, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this:
If he should break his day, what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship.
If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;

140. *pound of your fair flesh.* Why does Antonio take this so lightly? Then why does Shakespeare have Bassanio object?

154. *what should I gain.* What would he gain?

And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.
ANT. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.
SHY. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;
Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight,
See to my house, left in the fearful guard
Of an unthrifty knave, and presently
I will be with you. [*Exit Shylock.*
ANT. Hie thee, gentle Jew.
The Hebrew will turn Christian; he grows kind. 170
BASS. I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.
ANT. Come on; in this there can be no dismay;
My ships come home a month before the day. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house.*

Enter the PRINCE OF MOROCCO, *a tawny Moor, all in white, and three or four followers accordingly, with* PORTIA, NERISSA, *and their train. Flourish of cornets.*

MOR. Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnish'd sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,

166. *left in the fearful guard.* Does this cast a shadow ahead?

172. *dismay . . . day.* Look at the last two lines in the last scene of Act I and find Shakespeare's rule for ending a scene. What do you know of his stage settings that almost necessitated this?

Enter the Prince, etc. Note the formal setting of this scene in contrast to those of the first act; why is it so planned?

1. *complexion.* He is an African prince, tall and commanding, dignified, well bred, but, nevertheless, black.

6. *incision*: cut us and see "whose blood is redder" — that is, most noble, possibly in the sense of "blue blood," and most courageous.

To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath fear'd the valiant. By my love, I swear
The best-regarded virgins of our clime
Have lov'd it too. I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

POR. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing.
But if my father had not scanted me
And hedg'd me by his wit, to yield myself
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renowned Prince, then stood as fair
As any comer I have look'd on yet
For my affection.

MOR. Even for that I thank you;
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets
To try my fortune. By this scimitar
That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince
That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,

8. *aspect.* How should this word be accented? Is Morocco conscious that his color may not appeal to Portia? Is he ashamed of it?

9. *Hath fear'd.* Feared is a transitive verb here.

10. *best-regarded virgins.* Is this a natural argument for him to use?

11. *I would not change this hue.* Morocco is nobly loyal to his race — but the next line shows that his love for Portia is even greater than his love of country.

14. *nice direction*: critical appreciation. Is Portia appreciative of Morocco's fine qualities, and at the same time glad that her father's will has relieved her from hurting his feelings by a refusal?

20. *stood as fair.* Is this a falsehood? Or, recalling the ridiculous suitors she described to Nerissa in Act I, is it literally true?

22. *Even for that.* Morocco's courtesy is unfailing; see if it persists to the very end of his choosing in Scene VII.

25. *Sophy*: Ruler of Persia.

Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,
Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand.
So is Alcides beaten by his page;
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

POR. You must take your chance,
And either not attempt to choose at all,
Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage; therefore be advis'd.

MOR. Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my chance.

POR. First, forward to the temple. After dinner
Your hazard shall be made.

MOR. Good fortune then!
To make me blest or cursed'st among men.

[*Cornets, and exeunt.*

30. *mock the lion.* Would these boasts appeal to a girl, especially when accompanied by flourishings of the scimitar that might almost graze her garments?

32. *Hercules and Lichas.* If Hercules plays a game of mere chance with his little page, Lichas, he may be beaten by the boy. So there seems an element of unfairness which, for a moment, Morocco resents. Notice how tactfully Portia tells him that he need not take the chance unless he wishes to.

41. *Never to speak to lady afterward.* The "wit" of Portia's father made sure that only those who loved her to this degree could even try to win her.

44. *to the temple.* Morocco must go to the temple to take the oath described in l. 40.

Cornets: a formal recessional here that keeps the scene in one tone, and elevates to religious solemnity the somewhat fantastic will of a dying father.

SCENE II. *Venice. A street.*

Enter the Clown LAUNCELOT *alone.*

LAUN. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying to me, "Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot," or "good Gobbo," or "good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away." My conscience says, "No; take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo," or, as aforesaid, "honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels." Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack. "Via!" says the fiend; "away!" says the fiend; "for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind," says the fiend, "and run." Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me, "My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son," or rather an honest woman's son; for, indeed, my father did some-

This street, any street in Venice, with a half-witted but canny fool loitering along, trying to decide whether or not he will run away from the Jew, is as informal as any setting possibly could be in contrast to Scene I.

2. *this Jew.* Instantly we know who the Jew is. In this way the dramatist links this scene at once with what has already taken place.

2. *The fiend is at my elbow.* It is only by understanding that Gobbo first actually talks to this fiend, and looks at him as if he were there, and then, tapping his forehead, listens to his conscience, that one can keep track of his nonsense. Try to act it out in this way.

3. *Launcelot Gobbo.* How did the romantic first name come to be linked with plebeian "Gobbo"? Does the fool like the sound of his name?

5. *run away.* Launcelot suits the action to the words here, and runs a few steps up the street; then he stops with a jerk when his conscience says "No!"

8. *scorn running with thy heels.* Do you detect a double meaning here?

9. *Via.* Italians used this word to start up their horses.

12. *hanging about the neck of my heart.* Does this nonsense mean anything?

thing smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste, — well, my conscience says, "Launcelot, budge not." "Budge," says the fiend. "Budge not," says my conscience. "Conscience," say I, "you counsel well;" "Fiend," say I, "you counsel well." To be rul'd by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be rul'd by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel. I will run, fiend; my heels are at your commandment; I will run.

Enter Old GOBBO, *with a basket.*

GOB. Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

LAUN. [*Aside.*] O heavens! this is my true-begotten father, who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel blind, knows me not. I will try confusions with him.

GOB. Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

18. "*Budge.*" How can this be acted to be ridiculous?

22. *a kind of devil.* Why does Shakespeare want to show us Shylock through the eyes of his servant?

25. *conscience.* Why does Launcelot repeat this word so often?

28. *more friendly counsel.* What is the conclusion then of all this high moralizing?

28. *I will run.* Launcelot starts running at high speed and bumps into his half-blind father, who almost loses his balance.

32. *true-begotten father.* This is pure Launcelotese.

33. *sand-blind*: half-blind.

33. *high-gravel blind*: again Launcelotese for more blind than sand-blind, but not quite stone-blind.

35. *Master young gentleman.* The father's voice all through the scene is the shrill, shaky falsetto of old age.

LAUN. Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but at the next turning of all, on your left; marry at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

GOB. By God's sonties, 'twill be a hard way to hit. Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

LAUN. Talk you of young Master Launcelot? [*Aside.*] Mark me now; now will I raise the waters. Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

GOB. No master, sir, but a poor man's son. His father, though I say 't, is an honest exceeding poor man and, God be thanked, well to live.

LAUN. Well, let his father be what 'a will, we talk of young Master Launcelot.

GOB. Your worship's friend and Launcelot, sir.

LAUN. But I pray you, ergo, old man, ergo, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot.

GOB. Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

LAUN. Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three and such branches of learning, is indeed deceased, or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

37. *Turn up*, etc. All this is meant, of course, to confuse the blind man. Gobbo turns him this way and that as he speaks, spins him around on "turn of no hand," and gives him a staggering shove at the end.

41. *God's sonties*: God's Saints.

42. *that dwells with him*, etc. The younger fool would seem to have inherited his rattled brain from his father.

44. *young Master Launcelot.* Young Gobbo assumes great airs in calling himself "master," and his voice becomes pompous.

53. *ergo.* A bit of learning Launcelot had picked up, as he had the "Fates and Destinies" in his next speech.

GOB. Marry, God forbid! The boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

LAUN. [*Aside.*] Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop? Do you know me, father?

GOB. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman; but I pray you, tell me, is my boy, God rest his soul, alive or dead?

LAUN. Do you not know me, father?

GOB. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you not.

LAUN. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me; it is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son. Give me your blessing; truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son may, but in the end truth will out.

GOB. Pray you, sir, stand up. I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.

LAUN. Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing. I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.

GOB. I cannot think you are my son.

LAUN. I know not what I shall think of that; but I am Launcelot, the Jew's man, and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother.

GOB. Her name is Margery, indeed. I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipp'd might he be! what a beard hast thou got! Thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail.

LAUN. It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail grows

61. *God forbid.* This is genuine grief.

79. *give me your blessing.* Here Launcelot kneels before his father, but back to, so that his father's hands trying to touch his face really come in contact with his hair. This explains the dialogue that follows.

79. *your boy that was*, etc. Again this is pure Launcelotese.

backward. I am sure he had more hair of his tail than I have of my face when I last saw him.

GOB. Lord, how art thou chang'd! How dost thou and thy master agree? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now?

LAUN. Well, well: but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew. Give him a present! give him a halter. I am famish'd in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come; give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives rare new liveries. If I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune! here comes the man. To him, father; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter BASSANIO, *with* LEONARDO *and other followers.*

BASS. You may do so; but let it be so hasted that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock. See these letters delivered; put the liveries to making, and desire Gratiano to come anon to my lodging.

[*Exit one of his men.*

LAUN. To him, father.

GOB. God bless your worship!

93. *how art thou chang'd.* The old man still fumbles about the back of his boy's head.

97. *rest . . . rest.* An intentional pun.

103. *as far as God has any ground.* Something of a boast in Venice.

106. *You may do so.* This brisk, youthful planning is a bracing breeze blowing into the plot just as we are tiring of the clowns.

110. *To him, father.* Launcelot pushes his father forward into Bassanio's face every time he urges the old man to speak, then pushes him aside and hops into his place when he himself interrupts. The effect upon Bassanio is completely confusing, and, almost dizzy, he cries out in l. 131, "One speak for both."

BASS. Gramercy! wouldst thou aught with me?

GOB. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy, —

LAUN. Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man; that would, sir, as my father shall specify —

GOB. He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve —

LAUN. Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and have a desire, as my father shall specify —

GOB. His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are scarce cater-cousins —

LAUN. To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify unto you —

GOB. I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is —

LAUN. In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man; and, though I say it, though old man, yet poor man, my father.

BASS. One speak for both. What would you?

LAUN. Serve you, sir.

GOB. That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

BASS. I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit.
Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
And hath preferr'd thee, if it be preferment
To leave a rich Jew's service, to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

LAUN. The old proverb is very well parted between my

115–133. *Specify*, *infection*, *impertinent*, *defect* are all Launcelot's pretentious use of language.

121. *cater-cousins*: *quatre*, fourth cousins; not even as near as that is the meaning.

136. *preferr'd*: recommended.

139. *The old proverb*: "God's grace is gear enough." Sometimes the fool has real wit — it is commended in Bassanio's next speech.

master Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.

BASS. Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy son.
Take leave of thy old master, and inquire
My lodging out. Give him a livery
More guarded than his fellows'; see it done.

LAUN. Father, in. I cannot get a service, no; I have ne'er a tongue in my head. [*Looks on his palm.*] Well, if any man in Italy have a fairer table, which doth offer to swear upon a book, I shall have good fortune. Go to, here's a simple line of life! Here's a small trifle of wives! Alas, fifteen wives is nothing! Eleven widows and nine maids is a simple coming-in for one man. And then to escape drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed; here are simple scapes. Well, if Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear. Father, come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye. [*Exeunt Launcelot and Old Gobbo.*

BASS. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this:
These things being bought and orderly bestow'd,
Return in haste, for I do feast to-night
My best esteem'd acquaintance. Hie thee, go.

LEON. My best endeavours shall be done herein.

Enter GRATIANO.

GRA. Where is your master?

LEON. Yonder, sir, he walks. [*Exit.*

145. *guarded*: gauded, trimmed, probably with braid and buttons. Is this order given to Leonardo, as would seem the case from l. 162?

146. *I cannot get a service.* Launcelot is boasting *sotto voce.*

148. *a fairer table.* Launcelot's palmistry is as nonsensical as all his notions. As he pulls his old father along with him, the prose of the clowns ends, and the gentlemen speak in the regular blank verse.

160. *Return in haste.* There is a romantic charm in the quick surety of Bassanio's actions.

161. *My best-esteem'd acquaintance.* Imagine Bassanio's tone and grimace.

GRA. Signior Bassanio!
BASS. Gratiano!
GRA. I have a suit to you.
BASS. You have obtain'd it.
GRA. You must not deny me; I must go with you to Belmont.
BASS. Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano;
Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice;
Parts that become thee happily enough
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;
But where thou art not known, why, there they show
Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain
To allay with some cold drops of modesty
Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behaviour
I be misconstru'd in the place I go to,
And lose my hopes.
GRA. Signior Bassanio, hear me:
If I do not put on a sober habit,
Talk with respect and swear but now and then,
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely,
Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh and say Amen,
Use all the observance of civility,
Like one well studied in a sad ostent
To please his grandam, never trust me more.
BASS. Well, we shall see your bearing.
GRA. Nay, but I bar to-night; you shall not gauge me
By what we do to-night.
BASS. No, that were pity.

165. *Gratiano.* Words are always gay and crisp where Gratiano is.
169. *But hear thee.* Is this a natural speech of Bassanio's when so much rests upon his making a good impression upon Portia?
178. *Signior Bassanio, hear me.* Gratiano, in pantomime, acts out this promise, which is genuine but yet full of pure fun.
188. *you shall not gauge me*: give me "one last fling" to-night.

I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose merriment. But fare you well!
I have some business.
GRA. And I must to Lorenzo and the rest;
But we will visit you at supper-time. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The same. A room in Shylock's house.*

Enter JESSICA *and the Clown* LAUNCELOT.

JES. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so.
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee;
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest.
Give him this letter; do it secretly;
And so farewell. I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.
LAUN. Adieu! tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew! if a Christian do not play the knave and get thee, I am much deceived. But, adieu! these foolish drops do something drown my manly spirit. Adieu! [*Exit.*
JES. Farewell, good Launcelot.
Alack, what heinous sin is it in me

192. *That purpose merriment.* This type of forecasting coming events keeps our interest on tip-toe.

2. *a merry devil.* All this shows Jessica's lightness. Is she loyal to her father? careful of his money?

7. *Give him this letter.* Have we too many letters flying about in this act?

8. *I would not have my father see me.* Why not?

10. *tears exhibit.* Inhibit is what he may mean. Is his grief real?

16. *what heinous sin.* Why does Shakespeare give her a touch of compunction?

To be asham'd to be my father's child!
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian and thy loving wife. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *The same. A street.*

Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, *and* SALANIO.

LOR. Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,
Disguise us at my lodging and return,
All in an hour.
GRA. We have not made good preparation.
SALAR. We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.
SALAN. 'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd,
And better in my mind not undertook.
LOR. 'Tis now but four o'clock; we have two hours
To furnish us.

Enter LAUNCELOT, *with a letter.*

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?
LAUN. An it shall please you to break up this, it shall seem to signify.
LOR. I know the hand; in faith, 'tis a fair hand,
And whiter than the paper it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.
GRA. Love-news, in faith
LAUN. By your leave, sir.
LOR. Whither goest thou?
LAUN. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup to-night with my new master the Christian.

6. *vile, unless*, etc. It is worse than commonplace unless it can be done with originality and grace.
10. *An it shall please you.* Impertinent, but to the point.
12. *hand.* An intentional pun.
14. *Love-news.* Gratiano loves this situation.
17. *to bid my old master*, etc. This situation Launcelot relishes.

LOR. Hold, here, take this. Tell gentle Jessica
I will not fail her; speak it privately; go. [*Exit Launcelot.*
Gentlemen,
Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?
I am provided of a torch-bearer.
SALAR. Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.
SALAN. And so will I.
LOR. Meet me and Gratiano
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.
SALAR. 'Tis good we do so. [*Exeunt Salar. and Salan.*
GRA. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?
LOR. I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed
How I shall take her from her father's house,
What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with,
What page's suit she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake;
And never dare misfortune cross her foot,
Unless she do it under this excuse,
That she is issue to a faithless Jew.
Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest.
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *The same. Before Shylock's house.*

Enter the Jew SHYLOCK *and* LAUNCELOT.

SHY. Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio. —
What, Jessica! — Thou shalt not gormandise,
As thou hast done with me,— What, Jessica! —
And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out; —
Why, Jessica, I say!

19. *take this.* Still another letter!

3. *What, Jessica!* Three times Shylock interrupts his speech to call Jessica, each time more impatiently. Launcelot mocks him.

LAUN. Why, Jessica!
SHY. Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.
LAUN. Your worship was wont to tell me that I could do nothing without bidding.

Enter JESSICA.

JES. Call you? What is your will?
SHY. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica.
There are my keys. But wherefore should I go?
I am not bid for love; they flatter me;
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
The prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl,
Look to my house. I am right loath to go.
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.
LAUN. I beseech you, sir, go. My young master doth expect your reproach
SHY. So do I his.
LAUN. And they have conspired together. I will not say you shall see a masque; but if you do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black Monday last at six o'clock i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash Wednesday was four year, in the afternoon.
SHY. What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica.
Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum
And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,
Clamber not you up to the casements then,
Nor thrust your head into the public street
To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces,
But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements.

8. *Your worship was wont.* This is pure impudence.
16. *I am right loath to go.* Has he a premonition of disaster?
20. *reproach*: for approach, but Shylock takes the word Launcelot speaks.
32. *varnish'd faces*: the masks.

Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
My sober house. By Jacob's staff I swear
I have no mind of feasting forth to-night;
But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah;
Say I will come.

LAUN. I will go before, sir. Mistress, look out at a window, for all this;
There will come a Christian by,
Will be worth a Jewess' eye. [*Exit.*

SHY. What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha?

JES. His words were "Farewell, mistress!" nothing else.

SHY. The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder;
Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
More than the wild-cat. Drones hive not with me;
Therefore I part with him, and part with him
To one that I would have him help to waste
His borrowed purse. Well, Jessica, go in.
Perhaps I will return immediately.
Do as I bid you, shut doors after you;
Fast bind, fast find;
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind, [*Exit.*

JES. Farewell; and if my fortune be not cross'd,
I have a father, you a daughter, lost. [*Exit.*

37. *But I will go.* What holds him to this intention?

41. *There will come*, etc. The "merry devil" can even make rhymes for Jessica.

44. *His words were*, etc. Is this a direct lie?

45. *The patch is kind enough.* Shylock has a gentler side, but it recoils on itself when he realizes that now Launcelot can waste Bassanio's substance.

50. *His borrowed purse.* Do you think he wants Antonio to be unable to pay?

56. *I have a father*, etc. This seems a light speech for a daughter.

SCENE VI. *The same.*

Enter GRATIANO *and* SALARINO, *masked.*

GRA. This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo
Desir'd us to make stand.
SALAR. His hour is almost past.
GRA. And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.
SALAR. O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly
To seal love's bonds new-made than they are wont
To keep obliged faith unforfeited!
GRA. That ever holds. Who riseth from a feast
With that keen appetite that he sits down?
Where is the horse that doth untread again
His tedious measures with the unbated fire
That he did pace them first? All things that are,
Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd.
How like a younker or a prodigal
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,
Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind!
How like the prodigal doth she return,
With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,
Lean, rent and beggar'd by the strumpet wind!
SALAR. Here comes Lorenzo; more of this hereafter.

Enter LORENZO.

LOR. Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode;
Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait.
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,

1. *pent-house*: a narrow shelter, convenient for a hiding place.
4. *lovers ever run.* Do you not think that Gratiano "speaks an infinite deal of" something, instead of "nothing," as Bassanio said in Act I, Scene 1? Consider in this light all of his next speech beginning, "That ever holds"; its first six lines are well worth memorizing.

I'll watch as long for you then. Approach;
Here dwells my father Jew. Ho! who's within?

Enter JESSICA, *above in boy's clothes.*

JES. Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.
LOR. Lorenzo, and thy love.
JES. Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed,
For who love I so much? And now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?
LOR. Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.
JES. Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.
I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,
For I am much asham'd of my exchange.
But love is blind and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit;
For if they could, Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformed to a boy.
LOR. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.
JES. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?
They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light.
Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love;
And I should be obscur'd.
LOR. So are you, sweet,
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.
But come at once;
For the close night doth play the runaway,
And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

24. *you.* This must be prolonged into practically two syllables; thereby it is sure of its emphasis.

25. *my father Jew.* Imagine his wry face on the word "father."

42. *too too light.* Jessica has a pretty wit that makes her a gay companion for these young Christians.

43. *'tis an office of discovery*: meaning that bearing a torch is such.

JES. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
With some moe ducats, and be with you straight.
[*Exit above.*

GRA. Now, by my hood, a Gentile and no Jew.
LOR. Beshrew me but I love her heartily;
For she is wise, if I can judge of her,
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,
And true she is, as she hath prov'd herself,
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true.
Shall she be placed in my constant soul.

Enter JESSICA *below.*

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen; away!
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.
[*Exit with Jessica and Salarino.*

Enter ANTONIO.

ANT. Who's there?
GRA. Signior Antonio!
ANT. Fie, fie, Gratiano! where are all the rest?
'Tis nine o'clock; our friends all stay for you.
No masque to-night; the wind is come about,
Bassanio presently will go aboard.
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.
GRA. I am glad on't. I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone to-night. [*Exeunt.*

53. *she is wise . . . fair she is . . . true she is.* This is the side of her that her lover sees. Could her father say as much?

64. *No masque to-night.* So quick is the action that it cannot wait even for the merrymaking.

SCENE VII. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house.*

Flourish of cornets. Enter PORTIA *with the* PRINCE OF MOROCCO, *and their trains.*

POR. Go draw aside the curtains and discover
The several caskets to this noble prince.
Now make your choice.
MOR. The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire;"
The second, silver, which this promise carries,
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves;"
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
How shall I know if I do choose the right?
POR. The one of them contains my picture, Prince:
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.
MOR. Some god direct my judgement! Let me see;
I will survey the inscriptions back again.
What says this leaden casket?
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
Must give: for what? For lead? Hazard for lead?
This casket threatens. Men that hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantages;
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross.
I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.
What says the silver with her virgin hue?
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."
As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand.
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,

1. *draw aside the curtains.* Note the dignified ceremony with which we are first shown the caskets.

1. *discover*: a transitive verb here.

25. *thy* has no accent in the verse, but a strong one in the meaning.

Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady;
And yet to be afeard of my deserving
Were but a weak disabling of myself.
As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady.
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces, and in qualities of breeding;
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I stray'd no farther, but chose here?
Let's see once more this saying grav'd in gold:
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."
Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her.
From the four corners of the earth they come
To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint.
The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds
Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia.
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits, but they come
As o'er a brook to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
To think so base a thought. It were too gross
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she's immur'd,
Being ten times undervalu'd to tri'd gold?

32. *in birth.* This is true in Morocco's own land.

33. *graces . . . qualities of breeding.* This is also true according to the standards of Morocco's own country.

34. *in love.* Has he reached the right climax?

38. *that's the lady.* His quick conclusion attests his generous love for Portia.

41. *Hyrcanian.* Hyrcania was the name given to regions south of the Caspian.

51. *rib her cerecloth*: to be the casket for her shroud.

O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold, but that's insculp'd upon;
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within. Deliver me the key.
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

POR. There, take it, Prince; and if my form lie there,
Then I am yours. [*He unlocks the golden casket.*

MOR. O hell! what have we here?
A carrion Death within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

[*Reads.*] "All that glisters is not gold;
Often have you heard that told.
Many a man his life hath sold
But my outside to behold.
Gilded tombs do worms infold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgement old,
Your answer had not been inscroll'd.
Fare you well; your suit is cold."
Cold, indeed; and labour lost:
Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!
Portia, adieu. I have too griev'd a heart
To take a tedious leave; thus losers part.
[*Exit. Flourish of cornets.*

POR. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
Let all of his complexion choose me so. [*Exeunt.*

57. *upon.* Give emphasis in reading, and balance with emphasis on *within* in l. 59 to make the passage clear.

63. *carrion Death*: skull.

76. *Portia, adieu.* His quick farewell proves his "qualities of breeding."

78. *A gentle riddance*: a courteous leave-taking without complaint.

SCENE VIII. *Venice. A street.*

Enter SALARINO *and* SALANIO.

SALAR. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail.
With him is Gratiano gone along,
And in their ship I'm sure Lorenzo is not.
SALAN. The villain Jew with outcries rais'd the Duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.
SALAR. He came too late, the ship was under sail;
But there the Duke was given to understand
That in a gondola were seen together
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica.
Besides, Antonio certified the Duke
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.
SALAN. I never heard a passion so confus'd,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets.
"My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter!
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stolen by my daughter! Justice! find the girl;
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats."
SALAR. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.
SALAN. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.

3. *Lorenzo is not.* Shylock has discovered his loss and has gone even to the Duke, the chief magistrate of Venice, for assistance.

4. *villain Jew.* How easily the Christians label Shylock!

25. *Let good Antonio look he keep his day.* Now we see Shakespeare's real purpose in introducing the sub-plot of Jessica and Lorenzo.

SALAR. Marry, well rememb'red.
I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
The French and English, there miscarried
A vessel of our country richly fraught.
I thought upon Antonio when he told me;
And wish'd in silence that it were not his.
SALAN. You were best to tell Antonio what you hear;
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.
SALAR. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part;
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return; he answer'd, "Do not so;
Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay the very riping of the time;
And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love.
Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship and such fair ostents of love
As shall conveniently become you there."
And even there, his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible
He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.
SALAN. I think he only loves the world for him.
I pray thee, let us go and find him out
And quicken his embraced heaviness
With some delight or other.
SALAR. Do we so. [*Exeunt.*

30. *fraught*: freighted.

34. *do not suddenly*. Why does the dramatist show so often the love Antonio's friends bear him? and Antonio's love for Bassanio?

46. *big with tears*. Do you think Antonio is too sentimental always?

SCENE IX. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house.*

Enter NERISSA *with a Servitor.*

NER. Quick, quick, I pray thee; draw the curtain straight.
The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,
And comes to his election presently.

Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF ARRAGON, PORTIA, *and their trains.*

POR. Behold, there stand the caskets, noble Prince.
If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemniz'd;
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.
AR. I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage;
Lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.
POR. To these injunctions every one doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.
AR. And so have I address'd me. Fortune now
To my heart's hope! Gold; silver; and base lead.
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? Ha! let me see:
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."
What many men desire! That many may be meant

1. *Quick, quick.* Again we have the pleasant sense of being hurried from one moment of excitement to another.

17. *To these injunctions.* This speech of Portia's, with emphasis on "every one," indicates that the preceding speech of Arragon's was in the way of a complaint at the rigor of the oath.

By the fool multitude, that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;
Which pries not to the interior, but, like the martlet,
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.
I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump with common spirits
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves;"
And well said too; for who shall go about
To cozen fortune and be honourable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.
O, that estates, degrees, and offices
Were not deriv'd corruptly, and that clear honour
Were purchas'd by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare!
How many be commanded that command!
How much low peasantry would then be glean'd
From the true seed of honour! and how much honour
Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times
To be new-varnish'd! Well, but to my choice:
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."
I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

[*He opens the silver casket.*

POR. Too long a pause for that which you find there.

AR. What's here? The portrait of a blinking idiot,

27. *fond*: foolish, as usually in Elizabethan writers.

51. *I will assume desert.* How had Morocco debated the word "desert"?

54. *blinking idiot.* With what tone would he say this?

Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.
How much unlike art thou to Portia!
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
"Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves."
Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?
Is that my prize? Are my deserts no better?

POR. To offend and judge are distinct offices
And of opposed natures.

AR. What is here?

[*Reads.*] "The fire seven times tried this;
Seven times tried that judgement is,
That did never choose amiss.
Some there be that shadows kiss,
Such have but a shadow's bliss.
There be fools alive, I wis,
Silver'd o'er; and so was this.
Take what wife you will to bed,
I will ever be your head.
So be gone; you are sped."

Still more fool I shall appear
By the time I linger here.
With one fool's head I came to woo,
But I go away with two.
Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,
Patiently to bear my wroth. [*Exeunt Arragon and train.*

56. *How much unlike*, etc. This is definitely the speech of a "poor sport" and Portia justly reprimands him.

61. *To offend and judge.* What do you think this means? Is it that he has erred in judgment and yet committed no offense? Or is it that he has offended himself in not choosing rightly and yet should not take it upon himself to judge the fairness of the lot?

63. *The fire seven times tried this.* Do you think this more or less severe than the scroll that greeted Morocco? Does it fit better the quality of the chooser?

73. *Still more fool.* Every word he utters is that of a man who is vain, unable to be a good loser.

POR. Thus hath the candle sing'd the moth.
O, these deliberate fools! When they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.
NER. The ancient saying is no heresy,
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.
POR. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Messenger.

MESS. Where is my lady?
POR. Here; what would my lord?
MESS. Madam, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify the approaching of his lord;
From whom he bringeth sensible regreets,
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love.
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.
POR. No more, I pray thee. I am half afeard
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him,
Come, come, Nerissa, for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.
NER. Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be! [*Exeunt.*

79. *Thus hath the candle.* Can you judge from this how Portia distinguished between Morocco and Arragon?

80. *deliberate.* They consider too long: true love, she believes, will choose with a quick instinct. To accent this idea see how quickly Shakespeare brings the true lover to follow upon Arragon's heels.

89. *sensible regreets*: greetings that can be perceived by the senses — gifts.

92. *likely*: likable, sure to succeed.

93. *A day in April*: a poetic speech for a mere servant.

100. *mannerly*: in grand fashion.

101. *Bassanio, lord Love.* This seems to be almost a prayer. aside.

ACT III

SCENE I. *Venice. A street.*

Enter SALANIO *and* SALARINO.

SALAN. Now, what news on the Rialto?

SALAR. Why, yet it lives there uncheck'd that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wreck'd on the narrow seas; the Goodwins, I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat, and fatal, where the carcases of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip Report be an honest woman of her word.

SALAN. I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapp'd ginger or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity or crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio, — O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company! —

SALAR. Come, the full stop.

SALAN. Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.

SALAR. I would it might prove the end of his losses.

SALAN. Let me say Amen betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.

Enter SHYLOCK.

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

SHY. You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

SALAR. That's certain. I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.

3. *the narrow seas; the Goodwins*: the English channel.

22. *of my daughter's flight.* Shylock's mind is on his own losses, whereas Salarino and his friend are thinking only of Antonio's.

24. *the tailor that made the wings.* See Act II, Scene IV, l. 32.

SALAN. And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledg'd; and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam.

SHY. She is damn'd for it.

SALAR. That's certain, if the devil may be her judge.

SHY. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

SALAN. Out upon it, old carrion! Rebels it at these years?

SHY. I say, my daughter is my flesh and blood.

SALAR. There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and rhenish. But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

SHY. There I have another bad match. A bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar, that was us'd to come so smug upon the mart; let him look to his bond. He was wont to call me usurer; let him look to his bond. He was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his bond.

SALAR. Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh. What's that good for?

SHY. To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgrac'd me, and hind'red me half a million; laugh'd at my losses,

34. *more difference between thy flesh*, etc. So far all the discredit is on Jessica's side, little as Salarino sees it in that light.

36. *rhenish.* This means, of course, white Rhine wine.

39. *another bad match.* Does this sound as if Shylock hoped for disaster to Antonio's ships so that he might have him in his power? Remember this when you come to the judgment scene.

42. *let him look to his bond.* This becomes, from now on, almost a litany in Shylock's speeches.

49. *He hath disgrac'd*, etc. This is the second great impassioned speech of Shylock's, and to feel its argument, you should learn it by heart.

mock'd at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

Enter a Servant.

SERV. Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house and desires to speak with you both.

SALAR. We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter TUBAL.

SALAN. Here comes another of the tribe; a third cannot be match'd, unless the devil himself turn Jew.

[*Exeunt Salanio, Salarino, and Servant.*

SHY. How now, Tubal! what news from Genoa? Hast thou found my daughter?

TUB. I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her.

SHY. Why, there, there, there, there! A diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse

never fell upon our nation till now. I never felt it till now. Two thousand ducats in that: and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! Would she were hears'd at my foot, and the ducat in her coffin! No news of them? Why so? And I know not what's spent in the search. Why, thou loss upon loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge, nor no ill luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders, no sighs but of my breathing, no tears but of my shedding.

TUB. Yes, other men have ill luck too. Antonio, as I heard in Genoa, —

SHY. What, what, what? Ill luck, ill luck?

TUB. Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

SHY. I thank God, I thank God. Is't true, is't true?

TUB. I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wreck.

SHY. I thank thee, good Tubal; good news, good news! Ha, ha! Here in Genoa!

TUB. Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one night fourscore ducats.

SHY. Thou stick'st a dagger in me. I shall never see my gold again. Fourscore ducats at a sitting! Fourscore ducats!

TUB. There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my com-

79. *I never felt it till now.* This is significant — Shylock says bluntly that he never felt the curse upon his nation until private losses came upon him.

90. *other men have ill luck too.* Note how Tubal alternates ill news with good, thereby playing upon Shylock's feelings until he is distracted in his passion.

pany to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.

SHY. I am very glad of it. I'll plague him; I'll torture him. I am glad of it.

TUB. One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

SHY. Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal. It was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

TUB. But Antonio is certainly undone.

SHY. Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer; bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit; for, were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will. Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house.*

Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, *and all their train.*

POR. I pray you, tarry. Pause a day or two
Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
I lose your company; therefore forbear awhile.
There's something tells me, but it is not love,
I would not lose you; and you know yourself
Hate counsels not in such a quality.
But lest you should not understand me well, —

111. *It was my turquoise.* This note of torture is a new one and strikes close to the victim's heart.

116. *bespeak him a fortnight before.* Shylock wants to be perfectly sure of the officer.

117. *were he out of Venice.* Probably the deepest reason of all for wanting Antonio's career as a merchant ended.

1. *Pause a day or two.* Did Portia make any such suggestion to the other suitors? Notice throughout the speech the many contradictions and disavowals of her own words; what is their cause?

And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought, —
I would detain you here some month or two
Before you venture for me. I could teach you
How to choose right, but then I am forsworn;
So will I never be; so may you miss me;
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
They have o'erlook'd me and divided me;
One half of me is yours, the other half yours,
Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,
And so all yours. O, these naughty times
Puts bars between the owners and their rights!
And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so,
Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.
I speak too long; but 'tis to peize the time,
To eke it and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.

BASS. Let me choose;
For as I am, I live upon the rack.

POR. Upon the rack, Bassanio! Then confess
What treason there is mingled with your love.

BASS. None but that ugly treason of mistrust,
Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love.
There may as well be amity and life
'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

POR. Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforced do speak anything.

BASS. Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.

POR. Well then, confess and live.

BASS. "Confess and love'
Had been the very sum of my confession.

22. *to peize the time*: to hold time poised in suspense.
24. *To stay you from election.* What does she fear?
26. *Upon the rack, Bassanio.* Has Portia real wit? Only traitors should suffer the rack.

O happy torment, when my torturer
Doth teach me answers for deliverance!
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

POR. Away, then! I am lock'd in one of them;
If you do love me, you will find me out.
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.
Let music sound while he doth make his choice;
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,
Fading in music. That the comparison
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
And watery death-bed for him. He may win;
And what is music then? Then music is
Even as the flourish when true subjects bow
To a new-crowned monarch; such it is
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
With no less presence, but with much more love,
Than young Alcides, when he did redeem
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
To the sea-monster. I stand for sacrifice;
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
With bleared visages, come forth to view
The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules!
Live thou, I live. With much, much more dismay
I view the fight than thou that mak'st the fray.

[*A song, the whilst* BASSANIO *comments on the caskets to himself.*

43. *Let music sound.* How would the variations in the music help any one who was choosing? Have we not all played the old-fashioned game, "Magic Music," and found ourselves safely guided to the designated object?

44. *swan-like end.* The swan sings only when it is dying.

46. *my eye shall be*, etc. Just what does she mean?

55. *Alcides*: Hercules, son of Alceus, so called Alcides. Which of his labors is alluded to here?

58. *Dardanian*: Trojan.

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?
Reply, reply.
It is engend'red in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell;
I'll begin it, — Ding, dong, bell.

ALL. Ding, dong, bell.

BASS. So may the outward shows be least themselves:
The world is still deceiv'd with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt
But, being season'd with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damned error but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts.
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk;
And these assume but valour's excrement
To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,

63. *Tell me where is fancy bred.* What sentiment in this song is a warning?

74. *still*: ever, always, in Elizabethan usage.

75. *plea so tainted and corrupt.* Remember this when you come to the trial scene.

77. *In religion*, etc. Is Shylock in the writer's mind?

87. *excrement.* The growing of beard and long hair was intended, among barbarians, to add to their look of ferocity.

88. *Look on beauty.* All the gear which men and women weigh themselves down with to give an effect of beauty.

And you shall see 'tis purchas'd by the weight;
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it.
So are those crisped snaky golden locks,
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind
Upon supposed fairness, often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.
Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man; but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threat'nest than dost promise aught,
Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence;
And here choose I. Joy be the consequence!

POR. [*Aside.*] How all the other passions fleet to air,
As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embrac'd despair,
And shuddering fear, and green-ey'd jealousy!
O love,
Be moderate; allay thy ecstasy;
In measure rein thy joy; scant this excess!
I feel too much thy blessing; make it less,
For fear I surfeit.

92. *crisped snaky golden locks.* Cruled wigs were much in use among the Elizabethans. To make a pious distinction Cromwell later, you remember, cut close the hair of his Puritan followers.

99. *Indian beauty.* Which India is meant?

102. *Midas*: the king whose touch turned everything, even his daughter, to gold.

103. *pale and common drudge.* A fine characterization of silver.

108. *How all the other passions*, etc. Notice Portia's expressive personifications of despair, fear, and jealousy.

BASS. What find I here? [*Opening the leaden casket.*
Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,
Parted with sugar breath; so sweet a bar
Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs
The painter plays the spider, and hath woven
A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men
Faster than gnats in cobwebs. But her eyes, —
How could he see to do them? Having made one,
Methinks it should have power to steal both his
And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look, how far
The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
In underprizing it, so far this shadow
Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,
The continent and summary of my fortune.
[*Reads.*] "You that choose not by the view,
Chance as fair and choose as true!
Since this fortune falls to you,
Be content and seek no new.
If you be well pleas'd with this
And hold your fortune for your bliss,
Turn you where your lady is
And claim her with a loving kiss."
A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave;
I come by note, to give and to receive.

116. *demi-god*: god-like artist.
118. *riding on the balls of mine.* Can you seem to see eyes in motion in certain portraits?
121. *Should sunder*: that is, if anything must part them.
126. *steal both his*: that is, the first one he painted would be so lovely that he could not look away from it to paint the other.
131. *continent*: that which contains, as often in Elizabethan writers.
140. *by your leave.* As he says this, Bassanio kisses Portia.

Like one of two contending in a prize,
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
Hearing applause and universal shout,
Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his or no;
So, thrice-fair lady, stand I, even so,
As doubtful whether what I see be true,
Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

POR. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am. Though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better; yet, for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself,
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
More rich;
That only to stand high in your account,
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
Exceed account. But the full sum of me
Is sum of — something, which, to term in gross,
Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractis'd;
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted. But now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,

142. *Like one of two.* Just what does this comparison mean?

150. *You see me*, etc. If this speech does not satisfy us, the whole character of Portia, her charm, dignity, power to love, will fall with a crash. What do you think of it?

This house, these servants, and this same myself
Are yours, my lord; I give them with this ring;
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

BASS. Madam, you have bereft me of all words,
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins;
And there is such confusion in my powers,
As, after some oration fairly spoke
By a beloved prince, there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleased multitude;
Where every something, being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy
Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence;
O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead!

NER. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry good joy. Good joy, my lord and lady!

GRA. My Lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that you can wish,
For I am sure you can wish none from me;
And when your honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
Even at that time I may be married too.

BASS. With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

GRA. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.

172. *This house*, etc. How quickly Portia commits to Bassanio just those things he told Antonio he would gain if he won her!

173. *this ring*. This is seemingly inconsequential here, but afterwards of great plot importance.

180. *As, after some oration*. Just what does this comparison mean? Is Bassanio too ready with his fine speeches?

198. *you have got me one*. It is entirely in keeping with Gratiano's character that he shall gayly prosper his own affairs "on the side."

My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours.
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;
You lov'd, I lov'd; for intermission
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the casket there.
And so did mine too, as the matter falls;
For, wooing here until I sweat again,
And swearing till my very roof was dry
With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achiev'd her mistress.

POR. Is this true, Nerissa?

NER. Madam, it is, so you stand pleas'd withal.

BASS. And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

GRA. Yes, faith, my lord.

BASS. Our feast shall be much honour'd in your marriage.

GRA. But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?
What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

Enter LORENZO, JESSICA, *and* SALERIO, *a messenger from Venice.*

BASS. Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither,
If that the youth of my new interest here
Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,
I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.

205. *wooing here*, etc. We can easily imagine the torrent of persuasive words with which he swept Nerissa off her feet.

212. *mean good faith.* Bassanio insists that Gratiano keep his promise to prove gentleman if he were allowed to go to Belmont.

215. *Lorenzo and his infidel.* A happy couple enough — but does the word infidel bring a shadow with it?

218. *If that the youth*, etc. Bassanio's courtesy is invariable.

221. There is a curious device of meter here: l. 221 and l. 222 make together a complete line of five accents. Then l. 222, counted again, and l. 223 make a complete line. This has been called the use of the

POR. So do I, my lord:
They are entirely welcome.
LOR. I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here;
But meeting with Salerio by the way,
He did intreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.
SALER. I did, my lord;
And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio
Commends him to you. [*Gives Bassanio a letter.*
BASS. Ere I ope his letter,
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.
SALER. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind,
Nor well, unless in mind. His letter there
Will show you his estate. [*Bassanio opens the letter.*
GRA. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her welcome.
Your hand, Salerio. What's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success;
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.
SALER. I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.
POR. There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper,
That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek.
Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse!
With leave, Bassanio; I am half yourself,

"amphibious section" — a section that can go with either the preceding or the following line. It is not uncommon in the plays.

228. *Signior Antonio . . . his letter.* The shadow falls again upon this happiness which is the climax of the comedy.

234. *cheer yon stranger.* Would Jessica feel out of place here?

240. *There are some shrewd contents.* Portia's eyes are upon Bassanio.

245. *With leave, Bassanio.* She takes the letter to share its contents.

And I must freely have the half of anything
That this same paper brings you.

BASS. O sweet Portia,
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you, all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins; I was a gentleman.
And then I told you true; and yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart. When I told you
My state was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed,
I have engag'd myself to a dear friend,
Engag'd my friend to his mere enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady;
The paper as the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound,
Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio?
Hath all his ventures fail'd? What? not one hit?
From Tripolis, from Mexico, and England,
From Lisbon, Barbary, and India?
And not one vessel scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring rocks?

SALER. Not one, my lord.
Besides, it should appear, that if he had
The present money to discharge the Jew,
He would not take it. Never did I know
A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
So keen and greedy to confound a man.
He plies the Duke at morning and at night,

269. *Besides, it should appear*, etc. Here we see how accumulated suffering has goaded Shylock to a decision he would not naturally have made.

And doth impeach the freedom of the state,
If they deny him justice. Twenty merchants,
The Duke himself, and the magnificoes
Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him;
But none can drive him from the envious plea
Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.
JES. When I was with him I have heard him swear
To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
Than twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him; and I know, my lord,
If law, authority, and power deny not,
It will go hard with poor Antonio.
POR. Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?
BASS. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies, and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.
POR. What sum owes he the Jew?
BASS. For me, three thousand ducats.
POR. What, no more?
Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;

275. *impeach the freedom of the state.* A matter of greatest importance to Venice, the Queen of the Adriatic, the trading center of merchants from all parts of the globe.

279. *But none can drive him.* A blind fury always creates a blind obstinacy.

281. *When I was with him.* What do you think of Jessica's turning witness against her father?

295. *For me.* The gentle Bassanio places these two words exactly where they belong.

295. *What, no more?* With the ease of an heiress she speaks, and with a heart of generosity.

296. *Pay him six thousand,* etc. Did not the dramatist choose just the happy moment to tell Portia of Bassanio's debt? She may not be business-like, but she is wholly in love.

Double six thousand, and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.
First go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend;
For never shall you lie by Portia's side
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over.
When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!
For you shall hence upon your wedding-day.
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer;
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

[BASS. *Reads.*] "Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and since in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you and I, if I might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure; if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter."

POR. O love, dispatch all business, and be gone!

BASS. Since I have your good leave to go away,
I will make haste; but, till I come again,
No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,
No rest be interposer 'twixt us twain. [*Exeunt.*

310. *dear bought.* Just how dearly?

312. *Sweet Bassanio*, etc. What do you think of this as a letter of friendship?

323. *No rest be interposer.* Does the quatrain instead of couplet at the end of the scene give any added impressiveness?

SCENE III. *Venice. A street.*

Enter the Jew SHYLOCK, SALARINO, ANTONIO, *and Gaoler.*

SHY. Gaoler, look to him; tell not me of mercy.
This is the fool that lent out money gratis!
Gaoler, look to him.

ANT. Hear me yet, good Shylock.

SHY. I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond.
I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause;
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs.
The Duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,
Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond
To come abroad with him at his request.

ANT. I pray thee, hear me speak.

SHY. I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak.
I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.
I'll not be made a soft and dull-ey'd fool,
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
To Christian intercessors. Follow not;
I'll have no speaking; I will have my bond. [*Exit.*

SALAR. It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept with men.

ANT. Let him alone;
I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.

The situation as this scene opens is ominous: Shylock and Antonio, with the gaoler between them, are now in the order of reversed advantage. Antonio must plead for an extension of time. Shylock can "feed fat" all his "ancient grudges" in refusing to listen to his old enemy whom he now has "upon the hip"; and he is capable of making a virtue of having sworn to a bond which he must religiously keep. He now adds "I'll have my bond" to his litany.

9. *naughty*: negligent, worthless.

19. *Let him alone.* Does Antonio, temperamentally, give up too quickly?

He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me;
Therefore he hates me.

SALAR. I am sure the Duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

ANT. The Duke cannot deny the course of law;
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice, if it be denied,
Will much impeach the justice of the state,
Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go.
These griefs and losses have so bated me,
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
To-morrow to my bloody creditor.
Well, gaoler, on. Pray God, Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house.*

Enter PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA, *and* BALTHASAR, *a man of Portia's.*

LOR. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit
Of god-like amity, which appears most strongly
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
But if you knew to whom you show this honour,
How true a gentleman you send relief,
How dear a lover of my lord your husband,
I know you would be prouder of the work

22. *I oft deliver'd.* This reason for Shylock's hatred is new to us.
26. *The Duke cannot deny.* Antonio looks facts in the face.
35. *Pray God, Bassanio come.* Is this too sentimental?
5. *But if you knew.* Still another friend praises Antonio, for whom Portia is doing so much and whom she has never seen!

Than customary bounty can enforce you.
POR. I never did repent for doing good,
Nor shall not now: for in companions
That do converse and waste the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There must be needs a like proportion
Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestowed
In purchasing the semblance of my soul
From out the state of hellish misery!
This comes too near the praising of myself,
Therefore no more of it. Hear other things.
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
The husbandry and manage of my house
Until my lord's return. For mine own part,
I have toward heaven breath'd a secret vow
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here,
Until her husband and my lord's return.
There is a monastery two miles off;
And there will we abide. I do desire you
Not to deny this imposition,
The which my love and some necessity
Now lays upon you.
LOR. Madam, with all my heart
I shall obey you in all fair commands.

14. *There must be needs*, etc. Do you think this is true? Is Antonio like Bassanio in "lineaments," "manners" and "spirits"?

24. *I commit into your hands*. What a happy, inconsequential romance this is, when we consider how little sense of responsibility Lorenzo and Jessica have!

31. *There is a monastery*. Does Portia's plan dawn on you here?

POR. My people do already know my mind,
And will acknowledge you and Jessica
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
And so farewell till we shall meet again.
LOR. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!
JES. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.
POR. I thank you for your wish, and am well pleas'd
To wish it back on you. Fare you well, Jessica.
[*Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo.*

Now, Balthasar,
As I have ever found thee honest-true,
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,
And use thou all the endeavour of a man
In speed to [Padua]. See thou render this
Into my cousin's hands, Doctor Bellario;
And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagin'd speed
Unto the traject, to the common ferry
Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,
But get thee gone. I shall be there before thee.
BALTH. Madam, I go with all convenient speed. [*Exit*
POR. Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand
That you yet know not of. We'll see our husbands
Before they think of us.
NER. Shall they see us?
POR. They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit,
That they shall think we are accomplished

47. *Take this same letter.* Still another letter!
51. *and garments.* Here her plot becomes evident.
52. *imagin'd speed*: the speed of thought itself.
56. *convenient.* The literal Latin meaning of this word is something quite different from what the word implies with us to-day. What is the difference?
61. *accomplished with that we lack*: disguised as a judge and clerk, which we are not.

With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
And speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died.
I could not do withal. Then I'll repent,
And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them;
And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
That men shall swear I have discontinued school
Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
Which I will practise.

NER. Why, shall we turn to men?

POR. Fie, what a question's that!
But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us
At the park gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles to-day. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *The same. A garden.*

Enter Clown LAUNCELOT *and* JESSICA.

LAUN. Yes, truly; for, look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children; therefore, I promise ye, I fear you. I was always plain with you, and so now I

62. *I'll hold thee any wager.* This is almost exactly like Rosalind's playful boasting that she can play the man's part in the Forest of Arden.

72. *could not do withal*: could not help it.

74. *these puny lies.* Where had she heard them much of late?

speak my agitation of the matter; therefore be o' good cheer, for truly I think you are damn'd. There is but one hope in it that can do you any good; and that is but a kind of bastard hope neither.

JES. And what hope is that, I pray thee?

LAUN. Marry, you may partly hope that your father got you not, that you are not the Jew's daughter.

JES. That were a kind of bastard hope, indeed. So the sins of my mother should be visited upon me.

LAUN. Truly then I fear you are damn'd both by father and mother; thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis, your mother. Well, you are gone both ways.

JES. I shall be sav'd by my husband. He hath made me a Christian.

LAUN. Truly, the more to blame he; we were Christians enow before; e'en as many as could well live, one by another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs. If we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

Enter LORENZO.

JES. I'll tell my husband, Launcelot, what you say. Here he comes.

LOR. I shall grow jealous of you shortly, Launcelot, if you thus get my wife into corners.

JES. Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo; Launcelot and I are out. He tells me flatly there is no mercy for me in heaven because I am a Jew's daughter; and he says, you are no good member of the commonwealth, for in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork.

14. *Scylla and Charybdis.* You will recall this adventure of Ulysses; only, of course, Launcelot turns the feminine Scylla into the father and the masculine Charybdis into the mother.

LOR. I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots. Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

LAUN. That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

LOR. Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you! Then bid them prepare dinner.

LAUN. That is done too, sir; only cover is the word.

LOR. Will you cover then, sir?

LAUN. Not so, sir, neither; I know my duty.

LOR. Yet more quarrelling with occasion! Wilt thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant? I pray thee, understand a plain man in his plain meaning: go to thy fellows; bid them cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

LAUN. For the table, sir, it shall be serv'd in; for the meat, sir, it shall be cover'd; for your coming in to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humours and conceits shall govern. [*Exit.*

LOR. O dear discretion, how his words are suited!
The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words; and I do know
A many fools, that stand in better place,
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricksy word
Defy the matter. How far'st thou, Jessica?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

JES. Past all expressing. It is very meet
The Lord Bassanio live an upright life;
For, having such a blessing in his lady,
He finds the joys of heaven here on earth;

40. *cover*. This word is used in two senses by the Elizabethans, meaning either to lay the table or to cover the head.

52. *The fool hath planted*, etc. This is a perfect description of Launcelotese.

And if on earth he do not mean it, then
In reason he should never come to heaven.
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match
And on the wager lay two earthly women,
And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawn'd with the other, for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow.

LOR. Even such a husband
Hast thou of me as she is for a wife. 70

JES. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

LOR. I will anon; first, let us go to dinner.

JES. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.

LOR. No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk;
Then, howsoe'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things
I shall digest it.

JES. Well, I'll set you forth. [*Exeunt*

ACT IV

SCENE I. *Venice. A court of justice.*

Enter the DUKE, *the Magnificoes*, ANTONIO, BASSANIO, GRATIANO, SALERIO, *and others.*

DUKE. What, is Antonio here?

ANT. Ready, so please your Grace.

DUKE. I am sorry for thee. Thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.

ANT. I have heard
Your Grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify
His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate

68. *Pawn'd with*: laid in the scales with.

3. *I am sorry for thee*, etc. Does this foreshadow what is to come? Should the Duke so anathematize one party of the suit to the other?

And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose
My patience to his fury, and am arm'd
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
The very tyranny and rage of his.

DUKE. Go one, and call the Jew into the court.

SALER. He is ready at the door. He comes, my lord.

Enter SHYLOCK.

DUKE. Make room, and let him stand before our face
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice
To the last hour of act; and then 'tis thought
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;
And where thou now exact'st the penalty,
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
But, touch'd with humane gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety of the principal;
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
That have of late so huddled on his back,
Enow to press a royal merchant down
And pluck commiseration of his state
From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd
To offices of tender courtesy.
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

SHY. I have possess'd your Grace of what I purpose;
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn

12. *quietness of spirit.* Is his character consistent with the Antonio of the first scene?

15. *He is ready.* Does this indicate anything more than Antonio's "Ready" in line 2?

21. Consider the emphasis on "apparent."

To have the due and forfeit of my bond.
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
You'll ask me why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats. I'll not answer that;
But say it is my humour. Is it answer'd?
What if my house be troubled with a rat
And I be pleas'd to give ten thousand ducats
To have it ban'd? What, are you answer'd yet?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig;
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;
For affection,
Master of passion, sways it to the mood
Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer:
As there is no firm reason to be rend'red
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;
Why he, a harmless necessary cat;
Why he, a woollen bagpipe; but of force
Must yield to such inevitable shame
As to offend, himself being offended;
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodg'd hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd?

BASS. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,

38. *If you deny it.* Shylock trusts confidently in this advantage he has over the Duke.

44. *be troubled with a rat.* Has his analogy some literal application to Antonio?

49. *For affection*, etc. This difficult passage must mean that affection (like or dislike of a thing, sympathy or antipathy), being master of our feeling (passion) sways it (passion) to the mood of what it (affection) likes or loathes.

59. *certain*: fixed, unchangeable.

61. *losing suit.* Shylock has nothing to gain but — what?

To excuse the current of thy cruelty.
SHY. I am not bound to please thee with my answer.
BASS. Do all men kill the things they do not love?
SHY. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?
BASS. Every offence is not a hate at first.
SHY. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?
ANT. I pray you, think, you question with the Jew.
You may as well go stand upon the beach
And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
You may as well use question with the wolf
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops and to make no noise
When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;
You may as well do any thing most hard,
As seek to soften that — than which what's harder? —
His Jewish heart. Therefore, I do beseech you,
Make no moe offers, use no farther means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgement and the Jew his will.
BASS. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.
SHY. If every ducat in six thousand ducats

64. *I am not bound.* Shylock has been deferential to the Duke; now he turns his back indifferently upon Bassanio and throws his retort back over his shoulder.

66. *Hates any man*, etc. What is your answer to this? Shylock here turns sharply upon Bassanio.

67. *Every offence.* Every resentment we may feel at an injury is not a real hatred at first.

69. *think*: remember, realize. This speech is full of Antonio's usual resignation.

70. *You may as well*, etc. Is Antonio unexpectedly poetic here? How do you explain it?

79. *His Jewish heart.* How do you think all these things which Shylock hears said of himself affect him?

84. *If every ducat*, etc. If Shylock spoke these words very slowly and evenly what would be the effect?

Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them; I would have my bond.

DUKE. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?

SHY. What judgement shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchas'd slave,
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them. Shall I say to you,
"Let them be free! Marry them to your heirs!
Why sweat they under burdens? Let their beds
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands"? You will answer,
"The slaves are ours." So do I answer you.
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
I stand for judgement! Answer: shall I have it?

DUKE. Upon my power I may dismiss this court,
Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine this,
Come here to-day.

SALER. My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.

DUKE. Bring us the letters; call the messenger.

88. *What judgement shall I dread?* This question is perfectly sincere; in fact, Shylock is surprised at Bassanio's question.

102. *Answer: shall I have it?* This whole speech is dignified, firm, assured. The more quietly assured Shylock is here the more tragically lost will he be at the end of the scene.

104. *Bellario.* Watch for the plot purposes of introducing this learned doctor of law. Through the speeches that follow until Nerissa enters, Shylock hears the words of the others, but shrugs his shoulders as if they did not concern him and kneels down to sharpen his knife on his sole, slowly, with enjoyment.

BASS. Good cheer, Antonio! What, man, courage yet!
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all,
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.
ANT. I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death. The weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me.
You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio,
Than to live still and write mine epitaph.

Enter NERISSA *dressed like a lawyer's clerk.*

DUKE. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?
NER. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your Grace.
[*Presenting a letter.*
BASS. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?
SHY. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.
GRA. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou mak'st thy knife keen; but no metal can,
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?
SHY. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.
GRA. O, be thou damn'd, inexecrable dog!
And for thy life let justice be accus'd.
Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith
To hold opinion with Pythagoras,
That souls of animals infuse themselves

Enter NERISSA *dressed like a lawyer's clerk*: in black robe and cap.

126. *No, none that thou*, etc. Shylock is still busy with his knife, so contemptuous of Gratiano's question that he does not even trouble to look at him. Then during Gratiano's next speech, still kneeling, he slowly draws his bond from the folds of his gaberdine; the bond is his answer. He wonders, apparently, that these Christians can so waste their time and breath.

127. *O, be thou damn'd*, etc. This speech is exactly like the quick-tongued Gratiano.

130. *Pythagoras*. A Greek philosopher who believed in the transmigration of souls.

Into the trunks of men. Thy currish spirit
Govern'd a wolf, who, hang'd for human slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallowed dam,
Infus'd itself in thee; for thy desires
Are wolvish, bloody, starv'd, and ravenous.

SHY. Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud.
Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall
To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.

DUKE. This letter from Bellario doth commend
A young and learned doctor to our court.
Where is he?

NER. He attendeth here hard by,
To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

DUKE. With all my heart. Some three or four of you
Go give him courteous conduct to this place.
Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

CLERK. [*Reads.*] "Your Grace shall understand that at the receipt of your letter I am very sick; but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome. His name is Balthazar. I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant. We turned o'er many books together. He is furnished with my opinion; which, bett'red with his own learning, the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend, comes with him, at my importunity, to fill up your Grace's request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so old a

148. *Bellario's letter.* Shylock rises to meet this new turn of affairs; he listens intently to the letter, then scans Portia narrowly as she enters. Here is an element he may have to reckon with.

head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation."

Enter PORTIA *for* BALTHAZAR.

DUKE. You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes;
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.
Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?
POR. I did, my lord.
DUKE. You are welcome; take your place,
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the court?
POR. I am informed throughly of the cause. 170
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?
DUKE. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.
POR. Is your name Shylock?
SHY. Shylock is my name.
POR. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow'
Yet in such rule that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.
You stand within his danger, do you not?
ANT. Ay, so he says.
POR. Do you confess the bond?
ANT. I do.

Enter PORTIA. She is dressed like a Doctor of Laws in a red robe. Whether Bellario's illness was real we can never be sure; we do know that Portia's plan has availed that he should be absent from the court and that she should fill his place.

167. *take your place.* As a judge she sits and stands above all others in the court, on a platform a little lower than the Duke's throne.

172. *both stand forth.* The dramatic contrast between the two rivets every one's attention.

174. *strange.* Throw full emphasis upon this word.

175. *in such rule*: so regular, according to rule. The impression Portia gives is that the trial will be conducted absolutely according to strict legal procedure.

177. *his danger*: danger of him.

POR. Then must the Jew be merciful.
SHY. On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.
POR. The quality of mercy is not strain'd.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings;
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea,
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.
SHY. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,

179. *Then must the Jew.* In what tone would Portia speak? Shylock's answer is contemptuous.

181. *not strain'd.* Start the speech right by emphasizing the word "strained." Every line that follows reëchoes the idea of the first.

187. *temporal.* The word should have full stress.

191. *hearts.* The emphasis of the line is in this word.

193. *likest.* The word should be stressed.

193. *God's.* At each mention of God, Shylock bows reverently, while the Christians pay no attention to the word. It gives a curious impression of his belief that, in the sight of the Almighty, his plea is just.

The penalty and forfeit of my bond.
POR. Is he not able to discharge the money?
BASS. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;
Yea, twice the sum. If that will not suffice,
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart.
If this will not suffice, it must appear
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority;
To do a great right, do a little wrong,
And curb this cruel devil of his will.
POR. It must not be; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established.
'Twill be recorded for a precedent,
And many an error by the same example
Will rush into the state. It cannot be.
SHY. A Daniel come to judgement! yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!
POR. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.
SHY. Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.
POR. Shylock, there's thrice thy money off'red thee.
SHY. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven!
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice.
POR. Why, this bond is forfeit;

206. *Yes, here I tender it*, etc. Imagine Portia's feelings for her lover as he speaks these lines.

220. *A Daniel.* Daniel was only a boy when he convicted the elders of "false witness by their own mouth."

223. *Here 'tis.* Shylock's haste is both hateful and pitiful. Portia's next speech and his answer that he cannot perjure his soul are spoken impressively, solemnly.

227. *this bond is forfeit.* Portia holds the bond, reads it, and at the end of her speech is apparently about to tear it. The Jew's fingers, fluttering about it, even when she holds it, here seize it in terror. She keeps it, however, for a reason which appears a moment later.

And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful;
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.
SHY. When it is paid according to the tenour.
It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound. I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgement. By my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me. I stay here on my bond.
ANT. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgement.
POR. Why then, thus it is:
You must prepare your bosom for his knife,
SHY. O noble judge! O excellent young man!
POR. For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.
SHY. 'Tis very true. O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!
POR. Therefore lay bare your bosom.
SHY. Ay, his breast;
So says the bond; doth it not, noble judge?
"Nearest his heart;" those are the very words.
POR. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh
The flesh?
SHY. I have them ready.
POR. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,

240. *Most heartily I do beseech.* Antonio would have the horror over as quickly as possible.

254. *Have by some surgeon.* Portia slips in this necessity as quietly as if it were akin to knives and balances and bonds.

To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.
SHY. Is it so nominated in the bond?
POR. It is not so express'd; but what of that?
'Twere good you do so much for charity.
SHY. I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond.
POR. You, merchant, have you anything to say?
ANT. But little; I am arm'd and well prepar'd.
Give me your hand, Bassanio; fare you well!
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you;
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom. It is still her use
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance
Of such a misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honourable wife.
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I lov'd you, speak me fair in death,
And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt;
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.
BASS. Antonio, I am married to a wife

259. *I cannot find it.* Shylock takes the bond from Portia, and then gives it back, as if to ask if she can find "it so nominated." He may be confident, he may be a bit apprehensive — or both. Notice how Portia turns the conversation to the others and so leaves the Jew in suspense as to how serious she was about the surgeon.

261. *I am arm'd.* In what sense is Antonio armed?

278. *with all my heart.* We must remember that Elizabethan dramatists did not hesitate to introduce puns at the most serious moments.

279. *I am married to a wife.* The humor of Bassanio's offer and Gratiano's is a fine momentary relief from the tenseness of the situa-

Which is as dear to me as life itself;
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life.
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

POR. Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by, to hear you make the offer.

GRA. I have a wife, who, I protest, I love;
I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

NER. 'Tis well you offer it behind her back.
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

SHY. These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter;
Would any of the stock of Barrabas
Had been her husband rather than a Christian!
[*Aside.*
We trifle time. I pray thee, pursue sentence.

POR. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine.
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.

SHY. Most rightful judge!

POR. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast.
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

SHY. Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!

POR. Tarry a little; there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;

tion. Shylock is impatient, scornful of the Christians' apparent attitude toward the most sacred relationships of life, — and he gives a half-audible sneer at their words.

293. *Barrabas.* The meter requires accenting the first syllable.

301. *Most learned judge.* One great actor used here to turn his back on the audience, raise his knife in his hand, and, saying, "A sentence! Come, prepare!" to the Duke, show again his scales.

302. *Tarry a little.* These words should be spoken very slowly.

303. *This bond doth give thee,* etc. This is the most extreme interpretation of the letter, not the spirit, of the law; but it is also Shy-

The words expressly are "a pound of flesh."
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

GRA. O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!

SHY. Is that the law?

POR. Thyself shall see the act;
For, as thou urgest justice, be assur'd
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desir'st.

GRA. O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!

SHY. I take this offer, then; pay the bond thrice
And let the Christian go.

BASS. Here is the money.

POR. Soft!
The Jew shall have all justice. Soft! no haste.
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

GRA. O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

POR. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh. If thou tak'st more
Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance
Or the division of the twentieth part

lock's own particular kind of coin. As one authority has suggested, can you cut the melon without spilling the juice?

310. *O upright judge.* Here Shakespeare makes the most of the character of Gratiano which he has so carefully preserved in many inconspicuous ways.

311. *Is that the law?* Shylock should ask this question in a choked voice, addressed to the Duke.

315. *I take this offer.* Consider this concession of Shylock's when you are trying to decide whether or not Shylock is trying to feed fat some ancient grudge of race or religion.

318. *all justice*: the full course of justice.

Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.
GRA. A second Daniel! A Daniel, Jew!
Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.
POR. Why doth the Jew pause? Take thy forfeiture.
SHY. Give me my principal, and let me go.
BASS. I have it ready for thee; here it is.
POR. He hath refus'd it in the open court.
He shall have merely justice and his bond.
GRA. A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.
SHY. Shall I not have barely my principal?
POR. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.
SHY. Why, then the devil give him good of it!
I'll stay no longer question.
POR. Tarry, Jew:
The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
If it be prov'd against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts

331. *have you on the hip.* Recall Act I, Scene III, line 41, and so accent the word "you."

333. *Give me my principal.* Here Shylock drops his bond and clutches at the money, but there is a perceptible struggle before he does so. Some actors have had Bassanio here offer Shylock a bag of money, and had Gratiano snatch it away so that the Jew may have "all justice."

335. *He hath refus'd it,* etc. Here Portia descends from the platform, gives the bond back to Shylock, who, as he speaks line 342, throws it at Antonio's feet.

343. *Tarry, Jew.* There is new alarm for Shylock here.

344. *another hold on you.* Portia lays great stress upon this, which is, doubtless, Shakespeare's addition to the old story because his own sense of pure legal justice was offended by Portia's interpretation of the law.

He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice:
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,
That indirectly, and directly too,
Thou hast contriv'd against the very life
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd
The danger formerly by me rehears'd.
Down therefore and beg mercy of the Duke.

GRA. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself;
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.

DUKE. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it.
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
The other half comes to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive into a fine.

POR. Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.

SHY. Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that.
You take my house when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live.

POR. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

GRA. A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake.

360. *Down therefore.* The great actor, Edwin Booth, used here to kneel while Gratiano held him during the speech, lines 361-364; when Shylock said "Nay, take my life," he was still on his knees and trembling; he rose quickly, however, when Portia asked, "What mercy can you render him, Antonio?"

365. *difference of our spirits.* What do you think of this difference?

ANT. So please my lord the Duke and all the court
To quit the fine for one half of his goods,
I am content; so he will let me have
The other half in use, to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter:
Two things provided more, that, for this favour,
He presently become a Christian;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd,
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.
DUKE. He shall do this, or else I do recant
The pardon that I late pronounced here.
POR. Art thou contented, Jew? What dost thou say?
SHY. I am content.
POR. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.
SHY. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence.
I am not well. Send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.
DUKE. Get thee gone, but do it.
GRA. In christening shalt thou have two godfathers:

381. *unto the gentleman.* Whether or not consciously, Antonio's terms are the most cruel possible to the Jew: he strikes at the mainsprings of his life — his daughter, his religion, his money. And the Duke stipulates that he has to yield on these three counts, or he cannot save his life. No wonder he groans and staggers uncertainly. He is given no choice.

390. *What dost thou say?* Shylock might well here make a gesture of appeal to Portia, then, realizing it is useless, check his petition.

391. *I am content.* The human voice can hardly express all the agony of losing that is in those words.

392. *give me leave.* This shows how mortally deep is the unexpected wound.

395. *In christening*, etc. Here Gratiano takes him by the arm to lead him from the court, and at the end of his speech he hurls him from him. Shylock does not forget to bow to the Duke; on his way to the door he passes Antonio with a gesture of hatred; his hand goes

Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font. [*Exit Shylock.*

DUKE. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

POR. I humbly do desire your Grace of pardon.
I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet I presently set forth.

DUKE. I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.
Antonio, gratify this gentleman;
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.
[*Exeunt Duke and his train.*

BASS. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties; in lieu whereof
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.

ANT. And stand indebted, over and above,
In love and service to you evermore.

POR. He is well paid that is well satisfied;
And I, delivering you, am satisfied
And therein do account myself well paid.
My mind was never yet more mercenary.
I pray you, know me when we meet again.
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

BASS. Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further.
Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute,

to his breast, falls as the door opens slowly; and he goes through, tottering, broken, heartrending. As the door closes after him, is any one really satisfied? The case has turned against him with an inexplicable tragic surety — but it is so quick that we catch our breath.

396. *ten more*: that is, a jury of twelve men.

404. *you* and *bound* have the emphasis here. The echo of "my bond" is still in the Duke's mind.

409. *freely cope*: offer ducats in exchange for.

416. *pray you, know me.* Portia is being wholly roguish here.

Not as a fee. Grant me two things, I pray you,
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

POR. You press me far, and therefore I will yield.
[*To* ANT.] Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake;
[*To* BASS.] And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you.
Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more;
And you in love shall not deny me this.

BASS. This ring, good sir, alas, it is a trifle!
I will not shame myself to give you this.

POR. I will have nothing else but only this;
And now methinks I have a mind to it.

BASS. There's more depends on this than on the value.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation;
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

POR. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers.
You taught me first to beg; and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.

BASS. Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife;
And when she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

POR. That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
An if your wife be not a mad-woman,
And know how well I have deserv'd the ring,
She would not hold out enemy for ever,
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

[*Exeunt Portia and Nerissa.*

423. *your gloves.* Not for their value, but for identification.

424. *this ring.* Portia is even more roguish in asking for the ring. Bassanio's embarrassment is delicious.

435. *liberal in offers.* Only a woman's quick wit could so play upon a lover's feelings.

438. *my wife*: my affianced wife — a happy evidence of the faithful relations of those days.

ANT. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring.
Let his deservings and my love withal
Be valued against your wife's commandment.
BASS. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;
Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,
Unto Antonio's house. Away! make haste.
[*Exit Gratiano.*
Come, you and I will thither presently;
And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont. Come, Antonio. *Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The same. A street.*

Enter PORTIA *and* NERISSA.

POR. Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed
And let him sign it. We'll away to-night,
And be a day before our husbands home.
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

Enter GRATIANO.

GRA. Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en.
My Lord Bassanio upon more advice
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.
POR. That cannot be.
His ring I do accept most thankfully,
And so, I pray you, tell him; furthermore,
I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.
GRA. That will I do.
NER. Sir, I would speak with you.

446. *let him have the ring.* Antonio's would be the only voice that could induce Bassanio to part with the ring. It is a good point dramatically — and humanly — that Bassanio delays so long that he must send Gratiano running after Portia with the ring.

454. *Fly.* The word is most happily selected to show the lover's eagerness.

[*Aside to* POR.] I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

POR. [*Aside to* NER.] Thou mayst, I warrant. We shall have old swearing
That they did give the rings away to men;
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.
[*Aloud.*] Away! make haste. Thou know'st where I will tarry.

NER. Come, good sir, will you show me to this house?

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V

SCENE I. *Belmont. Avenue to Portia's house.*

Enter LORENZO *and* JESSICA.

LOR. The moon shines bright. In such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
And they did make no noise, in such a night
Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls,
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.

JES. In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,

1. *The moon shines bright.* Just the touch of beauty needed to end the play gracefully — and it needs great beauty to erase the deep impression made by the trial scene, and sweet words to drown the last broken sentences of the Jew.

4. *Troilus*: a tale of lovers of the Trojan War which Shakespeare probably read in Chaucer's *Troilus and Cresseide.*

7. *Thisbe.* We know the story from the classics, and from Shakespeare's use of it in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*; but, again, he probably took it from Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* where Troilus, Thisbe, Dido, and Medea are grouped together. He may also have known their stories as his favorite Ovid told them. The real point is, however, that he has chosen lovers whom we associate with the witchery of moonlight — happy with the happiness that is akin to sadness. To this he adds the ecstasy of music, and a spell envelops

And saw the lion's shadow ere himself
And ran dismay'd away.

LOR. In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.

JES. In such a night
Medea gathered the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.

LOR. In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

JES. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he lov'd her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith
And ne'er a true one.

LOR. In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

JES. I would out-night you, did no body come;
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

Enter a Messenger.

LOR. Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

MESS. A friend.

LOR. A friend! what friend? Your name, I pray you, friend?

every one, even the clownish Launcelot. Jessica and Lorenzo are different beings under its power.

15. *Did Jessica.* The steps are charming by which the lovers lead each other to their own happiness.

25. *Who comes so fast.* This line, in itself, is pure music. The entrance of Stephano and the dialogue that follows does not disturb the magic of the scene.

MESS. Stephano is my name; and I bring word
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont. She doth stray about
By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.
LOR. Who comes with her?
MESS. None but a holy hermit and her maid.
I pray you, is my master yet return'd?
LOR. He is not, nor we have not heard from him.
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter Clown LAUNCELOT.

LAUN. Sola, sola! wo ha, ho! sola, sola!
LOR. Who calls?
LAUN. Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo? Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!
LOR. Leave hollaing, man; here.
LAUN. Sola! where? where?
LOR. Here.
LAUN. Tell him there's a post come from my master, with his horn full of good news. My master will be here ere morning. [*Exit.*
LOR. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.
And yet no matter; why should we go in?
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,

31. *By holy crosses.* These holy crosses are to be met at every turn in Italy, — by crossroads, on the summits of hills, and even in the midst of the sea near Venice there are two, the light from their lamps shining across the waves.

39. *Sola, sola.* Launcelot is trying to imitate the music of the courier's horn. But even he moves through the moonlight with new grace and melody.

50. *why should we go in?* The beauty of the moonlight is not to be lightly exchanged, and there is no reason to do so until Portia comes.

Within the house, your mistress is at hand;
And bring your music forth into the air. [*Exit Mess.*
How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears. Soft stillness and the night
Becomes the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Enter Musicians.

Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn;
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear
And draw her home with music. [*Music.*

JES. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

LOR. The reason is, your spirits are attentive;
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,

59. *patines of bright gold*: the Latin *patina* means a thin round plate, — so might quiet stars seem on a quiet night, and so, too, might seem those soft clouds that float in the moonlight like disks of gold.

63. *Such harmony*: that is, there is in our souls, were we not here on earth too material to sense it, a harmony like the harmony of the spheres.

69. *I am never merry*, etc. This one speech of Jessica's is somewhat redeeming; we all know what she means, and we feel that the softer influences that have now come into her life may make her more worthy than the mere scapegrace who tossed the casket down to Lorenzo. Is it strange that Jessica has never seemed to care about the outcome of the trial?

70. *The reason is*, etc. Lorenzo's exposition is simple and clear, and his allusion to the music of Orpheus is most apt. What do you think of the philosophy of "the man that hath no music in himself"?

Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood,
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze
By the sweet power of music; therefore the poet
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods;
Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections dark as Erebus.
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Enter PORTIA *and* NERISSA.

POR. That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.
NER. When the moon shone, we did not see the candle.
POR. So doth the greater glory dim the less.
A substitute shines brightly as a king
Until a king be by; and then his state
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters. Music! Hark!
NER. It is your music, madam, of the house.
POR. Nothing is good, I see, without respect;

89. *That light we see*, etc. Portia returns, naturally enough, in a thoughtful mood. She has lived through a sobering episode.

91. *a good deed.* Do you think Portia refers to her rescue of her husband's friend from death?

99. *without respect*: without particular attention.

Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.
NER. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.
POR. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
When neither is attended, and I think
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things by season season'd are
To their right praise and true perfection!
Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion
And would not be awak'd. [*Music ceases.*
LOR. That is the voice,
Or I am much deceiv'd, of Portia.
POR. He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,
By the bad voice.
LOR. Dear lady, welcome home!
POR. We have been praying for our husbands' welfare,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
Are they return'd?
LOR. Madam, they are not yet;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.
POR. Go in, Nerissa;
Give order to my servants that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence;
Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you. [*A tucket sounds*
LOR. Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet.

103. *attended*: accompanied by those circumstances or surroundings that give value.

109. *the moon sleeps with Endymion*: that is, not shining brightly as at the beginning of the scene. Lorenzo bears this out by recognizing Portia, not by sight, but by her voice.

121. *A tucket*: from the Italian word, *toccato*, a flourish on a trumpet.

122. *is at hand*. With the sure swiftness of love, Portia and Bassanio arrive at almost the same moment.

We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.
POR. This night methinks is but the daylight sick;
It looks a little paler. 'Tis a day,
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, *and their followers.*

BASS. We should hold day with the Antipodes,
If you would walk in absence of the sun.
POR. Let me give light, but let me not be light;
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,
And never be Bassanio so for me.
But God sort all! You're welcome home, my lord.
BASS. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.
This is the man, this is Antonio,
To whom I am so infinitely bound.
POR. You should in all sense be much bound to him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.
ANT. No more than I am well acquitted of.
POR. Sir, you are very welcome to our house.
It must appear in other ways than words,
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.
GRA. [*To* NER.] By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk.
Would he were gelt that had it, for my part,
Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.
POR. A quarrel, ho, already! What's the matter?

127. *hold day with the Antipodes*: that is, if you would walk in the night, the darkness would be bright as the daylight on the other side of the globe.

129. *not be light.* Where else in the play had Bassanio punned on the word?

141. *breathing courtesy*: mere polite words.

146. *A quarrel, ho.* As usual, Gratiano is busy "on the side"; this gives just the suitable introduction to the ring episode. The humor of the following line is irresistible.

GRA. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me, whose posy was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, "Love me, and leave me not."
NER. What talk you of the posy or the value?
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death,
And that it should lie with you in your grave.
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! No, God's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.
GRA. He will, an if he live to be a man.
NER. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.
GRA. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy,
No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk,
A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee.
I could not for my heart deny it him.
POR. You were to blame, I must be plain with you,
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift;
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger
And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.
I gave my love a ring, and made him swear
Never to part with it; and here he stands.
I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,
You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief.
An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.
BASS. [*Aside.*] Why, I were best to cut my left hand off

148. *posy*: poesy, a motto engraved inside a ring.
170. *I gave my love a ring.* With what lovely assurance Shakespeare makes Portia carry through this little farce!

And swear I lost the ring defending it.
GRA. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
Unto the judge that begg'd it, and indeed
Deserv'd it too; and then the boy, his clerk,
That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine;
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.
POR. What ring gave you, my lord?
Not that, I hope, which you receiv'd of me.
BASS. If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it; it is gone.
POR. Even so void is your false heart of truth.
By heaven, I will ne'er come in your house
Until I see the ring.
NER. Nor I in yours
Till I again see mine.
BASS. Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
And would conceive for what I gave the ring,
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.
POR. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
Or your own honour to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleas'd to have defended it

179. *My Lord Bassanio*, etc. This is Gratiano's old-time bluntness.

199. *If you had known the virtue of the ring*, etc. Delicious mockery on Portia's part. This is the wit Bassanio commends in his first description of her to Antonio.

With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:
I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.

BASS. No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him
And suffer'd him to go displeas'd away;
Even he that did uphold the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforc'd to send it after him;
I was beset with shame and courtesy;
My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;
For, by these blessed candles of the night,
Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

POR. Let not that doctor e'er come near my house.
Since he hath got the jewel that I lov'd,
And that which you did swear to keep for me,
I will become as liberal as you.
I'll not deny him any thing I have.

NER. Nor I his clerk; therefore be well advis'd
How you do leave me to mine own protection.

GRA. Well, do you so; let not me take him then;
For if I do, I'll mar the young clerk's pen.

ANT. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

POR. Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.

BASS. Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong;
And in the hearing of these many friends
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself —

232. *the unhappy subject.* Is this speech in keeping with the scene?

POR. Mark you but that!
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself,
In each eye, one. Swear by your double self,
And there's an oath of credit.
BASS. Nay, but hear me.
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.
ANT. I once did lend my body for his wealth,
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried. I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.
POR. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this
And bid him keep it better than the other.
ANT. Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.
BASS. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!
POR. I had it of him. Pardon me, Bassanio:
You are all amaz'd.
Here is a letter; read it at your leisure.
It comes from Padua, from Bellario.
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
Nerissa there her clerk. Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you
And even but now return'd; I have not yet
Ent'red my house. Antonio, you are welcome;
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect. Unseal this letter soon;
There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbour suddenly.
You shall not know by what strange accident

245. *be bound again.* This offer of Antonio's throws our minds back to the first scene and helps create a sense of unity for the plot.

254. *Here is a letter*, etc. A packet of fairy-tale surprises at the end, even to good news for Antonio. It is just as well that Portia does not attempt to explain how she knew about his ships!

I chanced on this letter.

ANT. I am dumb.

BASS. Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

ANT. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;
For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road.

POR. How now, Lorenzo!
My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

NER. Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.
There do I give to you and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

LOR. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starved people.

POR. It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
Of these events at full. Let us go in;
And charge us there upon inter'gatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.

GRA. Let it be so.
Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. [*Exeunt.*

275. *After his death.* To us this might be the shadow of a shadow, but Shakespeare meant it for "happiness all round."

280. *upon inter'gatories*: ask and answer questions.

284. *Nerissa's ring.* The last word of the scene is the word that has provided all the material for the fifth act, so it deserves this position.

HOW TO STUDY THE PLAY

DISCUSSION OF THE PLAY SCENE BY SCENE

ACT I, SCENE I

THERE are two words in the first two lines that strike the keynote of this scene. Antonio is crushed by a mood of wearying sadness that he cannot explain. All the suggestions of Salarino and Salanio fail to convince him that he has any definite specific cause for fearing coming disaster; that is Shakespeare's idea of presentiment, and its hold upon one's spirit. It cannot be reasoned away; it persists and overshadows one until some evil fortune, weeks or months later, accounts for it. Its very vagueness increases its power. The second scene opens in the same mood; Portia, too, is "wearied" by the unnatural will of her father. The third scene, although not repeating the word "weary," presents at once a moment when Bassanio is indeed weary, even to impatience, of assuring Shylock that Antonio is good for the loan of the ducats. So this quick getting under way in the first act, the important threads of the plot being started at once, is scaled to one note of tragedy. It is lightened, to be sure, by Portia's moments of playful wit, and by Gratiano's rougher nonsense; but each of the three principal characters, before they become entangled with one another, is possessed by a situation of possible grave disaster which he is powerless to shake off.

Name three points which make this a perfect opening scene for the play. Into what two parts does the scene naturally divide? Which interests you the more, the general conversation of several friends with Antonio, or the single dialogue with Bassanio? Is the scene well planned in placing the dialogue last? What speech marks the dramatic climax of the scene? Can you make, in your mind, definite and different personalities of Salarino, Salanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano? Which one is the most amusing to you? Why must supporting characters like these appear in a drama? If they are necessary, what is the playwright's problem in managing them? What two points,

for plot purposes, is the scene expected to make? Is it too long in making them? Does it enlist your real interest in the characters? Having finished it, why do you go on to read the second scene? Is there successful "carrying ahead" of our interest? The meter of the scene is fairly regular, the iambic pentameter of English blank verse, but there are a few irregularities that are typical. For instance, l. 5, "I am to learn," has only two accents; and l. 22, "Would make me sad," has only two. But the two instances are not identical; l. 22 is plainly supplemented by l. 23 with its three accents, so that the two read together form a complete line, and the rhythm is not disturbed. But l. 5 has no such supplement, as l. 6 is a complete pentameter in itself. Why did the poet, then, make that conspicuous break? Was it to bring arresting emphasis upon "I am to learn," which is really the pervading note of Antonio's speeches? Or was it just for varying the steady recurrence of the iambic pentameter? Again, after l. 56 there is great unevenness; but does that not fit the informal greetings of these young friends? And does not the one passage of prose in the whole scene, in Bassanio's characterization of Gratiano's talk, ll. 113–119, serve to break off all the conversation of the group and prepare for the more consequential intensive dialogue between Bassanio and Antonio? It is worth while to note all these natural changes in the verse, for they always mean something — are never matters of carelessness. There are many slurrings of syllables and pronouncing of extra syllables to be made, also, to keep the verse as the poet intended it should be: for example, how would you read the following lines: 3, 8, 29, 41, 48, 49, 50, 54, 111? And, as you read, you will be conscious of many lines that begin with a trochee, which always puts the desired emphasis on the first word, as in ll. 18, 19, and of many that end with a short unaccented syllable that lightens the line as in ll. 41, 135. These points hold all through the play. Shakespeare's verse in the later plays is more sure in touch; but in his earliest plays he establishes for himself the principle that for momentous speeches the meter is most finished and firm, and that irregularities, where they occur, are introduced for a desired effect.

SCENE II

The charm of this scene is not often equaled in Shakespeare's plays. Two girls reading it in dialogue will be delighted at the

naturalness of this intimate talk between a young heiress and her companion — for Nerissa is not a maid. While Nerissa seems to insist piously, even superstitiously, upon Portia's abiding by the terms of her father's will, she is, nevertheless, having great fun in drawing from Portia her laughing imitations of her suitors. What young girl would not love to make fun of them — of such an array as this particularly? Portia's wit is as keen as a rapier and her humor as gay as a sunbeam. Her keenness has seen through and through the absurdities of all her lovers, and there is nothing in any one of them for her but laughter. She seems, as the scene goes on, to infect herself with her own mirth, and her mockery grows more and more amusing. How Shakespeare himself must have enjoyed characterizing all these foreign types, so ridiculous in London; especially how he must have enjoyed his Falconbridge! He has made Portia a philosopher, too, in the speech beginning, "If to do were as easy as to know what to do," and shown that she has a dignified, serious quality. The best, because the most human, touch is the care with which she avoids speaking Bassanio's name, and her quick embarrassment when Nerissa, with a sly side glance at her companion, asks if she remembers him. The scene is perfectly arranged to give us a comprehensive first view of Portia, to explain the casket situation, to narrow the suitors down to one, the Prince of Morocco, who is coming hot-haste to try his fortune. This is a strange thing, this matter of the caskets; how has Shakespeare made it seem acceptable, almost wise and natural, that a dead father's will should so curb the will of a loving daughter?

SCENE III

Compare this scene with the first and second of Act I in setting, tone, plot movement, and characters presented. Do you find dramatic contrasts? Do you see why almost all of Shakespeare's plays open with groups in conversation? Notice where these groups narrow to two or three characters. What then happens to the dramatic intensity? Is Scene III the crisis of the act? What are its most dramatic speeches? Just why is Shylock a more dramatic character than Antonio or Bassanio or Portia? What are his greatest speeches in this scene? Why do great actors of Shylock make much of this scene? What varying moods does he show, sincere and insincere? Why does Shakespeare provide so carefully that the Jew's plot should grow

little by little in his mind? Why does he take care that he should arouse some sympathy in us? And why does he plan that at one moment the whole idea of borrowing the money should seem to be given up? Learn by heart the speech beginning, "Signor Antonio, many a time and oft," and try to put into it every tone and gesture that Shylock must have used. Are the three scenes connected so that Act I is a perfect unit? What two threads of the plot are started? Is there already intimation that they will cross? What characters already interest you? If exposition is the great purpose of the first act of a play, is this act successful? What does Shakespeare add to the mere exposition, however? What do you really want to see in the next act? Is anything started that will move along inevitably, of its own momentum, in the next act?

ACT II, SCENE I

Have you a new impression of Portia in this scene? Do you think there is enough plot and interest in it to justify its being a distinct scene by itself? Watch as you read further and see if it could be combined with any other. How would you dress the Prince of Morocco, since his wealth and station in life are quite equal to Portia's? In the stage picture how are he and Portia great dramatic contrasts? Why did Shakespeare make this first chooser of the caskets so worthy a person in every way? Do you feel that he will choose successfully?

SCENE II

This scene is fully as amusing for two boys to act as Scene II of Act I is for girls. The costume of young Gobbo can be made ludicrous enough; in general, it is ragged, slipshod, ill-kept, to show how miserly the Jew, his master, is. Old Gobbo is also a tatterdemalion, and his hat which keeps falling off, his tall stick which keeps dropping, and the basket which he guards at all costs are sufficient properties for him. Two fools — father and son — the only difference that the son is a little keener, and more in the world as the younger generation would be. They have no charm, as have Touchstone, or the fool in *Twelfth Night* — nor are they as sententious as the gravediggers in *Hamlet* or the fool in *King Lear*; these two are just clowns that make a little fun and a good contrast with the other characters. Where does the plot advance in the midst of all their nonsense?

SCENE III

Is the scene worth presenting? Why did the dramatist insert it? Do you think it may have taken place in the street, and therefore did not require a new setting? Why does Shakespeare show Jessica turning against her father? Why does he show her disloyal to Jewish traditions? Since Jewish family ties are extraordinarily strong, Shakespeare must have some object in Jessica's unnatural attitude toward Shylock. In what ways is she a fine contrast to Portia and her respect for her father?

SCENE IV

Does the plot require this scene? Would all it tells us be gathered later on? Are you really interested to know who is to be Lorenzo's torch-bearer? What new element in the plot is in Lorenzo's last speech? How can it strengthen another thread of the plot already started? Is it possible that the dramatist can bring these characters into touch with the leading characters of Act I?

SCENE V

Do you learn anything new from this scene about the plot? about the characters? What new qualities of Shylock show here? of Jessica? Does Launcelot help the purpose of the scene by fluttering about?

SCENE VI

Although Scene III might be omitted, this scene has a part of the Jessica story that we would not like to lose. It is dramatic, set under the cover of night, full of fine speeches, and romantic in the moments when Jessica talks from the balcony and throws down the casket to Lorenzo. It convinces us that she and Lorenzo are genuine lovers. We must not take too seriously, perhaps, the theft of the money from Shylock. Shakespeare is buoyantly speeding lovers on their way and not making moral issues; if he were, we should have to stop and wonder where Bassanio would ever find the money to pay back Antonio. Would it be Portia's money in the end? These points simply do not exist in this love plot. Notice with what beautiful swiftness the scene at the end turns toward Portia and Belmont. It is very effective to have a moment or two of complete quiet after the masquers have fled, and then to have Shylock

return to his house, having feasted with the Christians, and stand, as the curtain descends, knocking at his door, and waiting for the vanished Jessica to open it for him.

SCENE VII

How would you set the scene to give an atmosphere of richness? Why do both Portia and Morocco have full trains of servants following them, and music? What kind of music would you arrange for Morocco's exit at the end? Shakespeare intends Morocco's long speech, ll. 4–60, to express his character fully. What likable traits has he? Does he reason well according to his standards? Does l. 20 mean conceit or dignity? What two feelings are expressed in his reasoning over the silver casket? Why does he hesitate to be afraid of his deserving? In his praise of Portia, from l. 38 to l. 59, does he not seem to deserve her? In what ways then does Shakespeare think him unsuited to Portia? Is he not more steady, responsible, and renowned than Bassanio? Does Portia await his choice with any real anxiety? What tells her that he will not choose aright? Does she know, as yet, which casket contains her picture? What is the effect of the entire scene?

SCENE VIII

Is this scene worth the space given to it? Why is it better to hear of Shylock's passion from others than from himself? Can you picture him crying in the streets, followed by mocking boys? Why does the report make Salarino and Salanio fearful for Antonio? Is it too much to hear at this moment that Antonio's ships may be lost? What is meant by "accumulation of tragic forces"? Is there an effort here to give a contrasting picture of Shylock and Antonio?

SCENE IX

Shakespeare naturally chose the romantic number of three for the caskets; so naturally he must contrast sharply the three suitors. What are the points of difference between Morocco and Arragon, in appearance? in qualities? in love of self? in love for Portia? If Morocco was far distant from Portia in *kind*, not *quality*, of upbringing, is Arragon even more distant in fundamental qualities of character? If your choice were limited to the two, which would you prefer? Do you enjoy the

quick surety with which these scenes run to the climax? Compare them, for example, with such scenes as Act I, Scene I, or Scene II. When a plot is under way, does it move more quickly? Why? Compare carefully the reasoning of Arragon with that of Morocco — did the dramatist mean to make Morocco gauge everything by his love for Portia, and to make Arragon gauge everything by his love for Arragon? Did that mean that the wise father had so arranged the inscription that a man truly loving Portia, yet not suited to her, would lose; and that a man truly loving only himself, and yet in birth and breeding possibly suited to her, would also lose? If so, was not his plan a satisfactory one? Note, however, that neither of these suitors has seemed to consider her fortune. Notice how differently Morocco and Arragon feel about "what many men desire," and how Arragon detests the "common spirits" and the "barbarous multitudes." What do you think of ll. 39–49 in Arragon's last speech? Which would you prefer to find, were you choosing yourself, the scroll in the gold casket, or the one in the silver? At the end of the scene, remember that Portia now knows which casket contains her picture. Does that make the next choice an easier or a harder ordeal for her?

ACT III, SCENE I

In this scene the feeling between the Christians and the Jews first shows its strength. So far Shylock is the one who is wronged, and our sympathies are all with him. But, of course, the Venetian gentlemen have all the unfeeling prejudices of their youth and their day. Tubal seems to delight also in tormenting Shylock — which can perhaps be credited to his jealousy of a merchant more prosperous than himself. We resent his slow torture of his suffering friend as much as the Christians' mockery. One feels that Shakespeare's comprehension of the passions of men brings him into sympathy, for the time being, with the great tragic figure whom he is willing to have defeated, for the purposes of his play, in the climax of the judgment scene. Remember we have not heard of Shylock since the report of him in Act II, Scene IX.

This is one of the most dramatic scenes in the play, and one of the four that give the passions of Shylock their full sway: Act I, Scene III; Act II, Scene V; Act III, Scene I; Act IV, Scene I. In this, more than in the others, he is at the mercy of

his own feelings; he seems to have no bulwark against the flood of his disasters, loss of money, loss of his daughter, loss of the ring which was the only reminder of days when he, too, was young and happy with his Leah. His position is made more tragic by the fact that it is a younger, unthinking generation, cruel because they are unthinking, that torment him with their outrageous taunts; and he is made more lonely in his suffering by the fact that Tubal, chief torturer, is one of his own tribe. It seems here that Shylock has no hatred of Antonio "for that he is a Christian"; his pain is wholly from his losses. Even that Jessica has fled with a Christian is not so much to him as that she has fled with ducats and jewels, and that he has had to spend money in a fruitless search for her. In fact, the clash seems to be on the score of money, and not of religion — certainly Shakespeare never intended this tragedy to be based on a struggle between two great religions, as many people have tried to interpret it. It is true enough that Shylock, being a Jew, naturally has a different set of standards for life and business from those of the Christians, but he is not necessarily in aggressive warfare against them, much as he hates the way they interfere with his business. However heatedly commentators have argued the case, it seems clear enough that Shakespeare takes no sides himself — nor is he interested particularly to do so. He gives us the situation as the history and circumstances of Jewish usurers in London had taught it to him and he presents all sides of Shylock's nature without blaming the Christians for his qualities, just as he presents a pack of yelping young Christian dogs without making Shylock responsible for their qualities. His Jew is both noble and ignoble; so are his Christians. In Shylock's great outburst, beginning "He hath disgraced me," what points are just and what are unjust? Up to the question "if you wrong us" he appeals to our sympathy and our answer to all his queries would be "Yes." But with the turn to "shall we not revenge" we must stand for the Christian "love thine enemy" and against the old Jewish principle of "An eye for an eye," and a "tooth for a tooth." And yet Christians have often held to that principle, too. We shall see what Portia will do in the great trial scene. When Shylock goes on with his storm of grief over his losses, we can hardly sympathize with him — especially when he comes to the self-pitying climax that all the woes of the world are heaped on his head

alone. But our condemnation changes once again when Tubal tortures him; it is too persistent hitting of the man who is down to appeal to our sense of fair play. How do you account for Antonio's fading into almost a myth since Act I? Do you recall here his fairness with Shylock, Act I, Scene III, ll. 120–127, and that it was Shylock who was afraid "the deal" might not go through? The pathos of the scene is in the predominance of the father and the husband over the usurer.

SCENE II

How many distinctions can you find between this casket scene and the two that have preceded it? What entire change has come over the attitude of Portia? Is she as much at ease in the presence of the man she really loves as she was with the others? As you follow through the dialogue of Portia and Bassanio in its quick uptakes and transitions, do you feel that these two are suited to each other? Does such companionable conversation and spirited talk mean that they are likely to be happy together? Had you thought how beautiful the stage picture is as the handsome Bassanio listens to the song, "Tell me where is fancy bred"? What makes a romantic background here for the lovers? What gives real dramatic intensity to the scene? Does Bassanio talk too long before he chooses? Is not the music helping him all the while? Were you acting the scene as Bassanio, would you move from one casket to the other, both considering the inscriptions and listening to the music? What a perfect description he gives us of Portia's "counterfeit" which we cannot see! Are not the words as beautiful as the miniature Bassanio holds? In Portia's speech in which she gives herself and all she has we have Shakespeare's ideal maiden lover — always coy, yet soulfully persistent; always delicate, yet ingenuously frank; always proud at the approach of her lover, and yet, when won, beautifully yielding and self-effacing. Although Bassanio knows he is to gain wealth by his marriage, is he ever a vulgar fortune hunter? Do not the other lovers seem to be there to celebrate the rare union of Portia and Bassanio? At least, it is a lovable gathering of happiness — the kind of sunshine that comes just before a storm. One of the finest elements in the beauty of the scene is Portia's distress over Bassanio's anxiety when he reads the letter, and his unhesitating frankness in telling her the whole

situation. Do you think Jessica's touch is on quite as high a level as the speeches of the other lovers? Note at the end of the scene that the quick movement which heretofore has indicated gayety now signifies the tense momentum of tragedy.

SCENE III

Is this scene too short to be worth while? Could you incorporate it with another? Could you convey this meeting of Antonio and Shylock to your audience in any other way? Is it worth while just to show the change in Shylock since we saw him last? Is it justified just for showing us how rigorous the laws of Venice must be in dealing justice to all merchants?

SCENE IV

Just as Shylock's inexorable cruelty begins to weigh heavily on the spirit of the play, the dramatist lightens all with this scene full of light-heartedness, friendliness, and a quickness of planning that clears the air. Portia is resourceful, amused at what she is about to do, practical in planning every detail of her plot, gracious, if too trusting, to the strangers in her house, and concentrated not only on her own happiness but even more on that of Bassanio and his unknown friend. She seems to have her household and servants in easy control, and their devotion to her speaks for her. Then at the end, when she is alone with Nerissa, she reacts like a girl to the fun of the adventure, and is like the light-hearted Portia we first met in Act I.

SCENE V

This scene seems trivial enough, but it restores to Belmont the atmosphere of peace and ease which Portia will find on her return. Has her nobility of character had its effect upon Lorenzo and Jessica? Has Launcelot changed at all? Has the dramatist any intention, do you think, of making us feel that Christian standards lift man and maid and even fool a little above what they were with Shylock?

ACT IV, SCENE I

How would you set this scene? If, by any chance, Shakespeare had in mind the Hall of Justice of the Doge's Palace, of which he must have read, he chose a most gorgeous background for the most widely read and acted of all his scenes. The scene

divides itself into two parts — the first half, with the law apparently favoring the Jew, leads to his satisfied climax, "most rightful judge"; the second, with the same law "wrested" to the judge's authority, declines quickly to the point of his leaving the court, beaten and confused, with the heartbroken "I am content. I am not well; send the deed after me." Through the whole scene Shylock has maintained a kind of sullen solemnity of deportment, changing now and again to a terrifying malevolence that made the audience shrink from him — as, indeed, Shakespeare meant they should. Because he alternates between a slow, calm, impenetrable cunning and malice — at least, it seems malice at those moments when he feels he has the law on his side — he, and he alone, maintains the high dramatic key of the courtroom scene. We must always remember that he is a strong man, with a sallow, sharp-visaged face, as to nose and chin, and with a mouth that in its moments of triumph seems cut in sinister fashion from ear to ear. His cloak is black, long, threatening; his "hair is of the Judas color," red; and, as a mark that he is an Italian Jew, he wears the red three-cornered hat. When he speaks, he tastes his words — "Three thousand ducats" can be drawn inward, hissingly, as if he were really enjoying them physically. Usually, except in the scene where he raves over Jessica's flight, he is decidedly a calm, determined, fearful antagonist. In the trial scene he stands like a tower, with justice on his side; and his speeches are direct, weighty, and manly, for he knows he is "not bound to please" anybody by his pleading. He may well be, in intelligence and culture, far above the group of thoughtless young Christians to whom he is opposed; to feel that he is merely socially below them is, naturally enough, bitter to his spirit. Antonio's gloom is of so undramatic a quality that Shylock alone must be the dark shadow to contrast with the comedy, and so the dramatist makes him an "inhuman wretch, incapable of pity, void and empty from any dram of mercy." Having so made him, Shakespeare must then proceed, as is his custom, to make him a living human being — a father and husband, a religious martyr, a sufferer with all the rest of his tribe. Actors will always let one side of his nature or another be predominant, according to their personal views; but the many different Shylocks of their interpretations only build up, when all is said, the many-sided Shylock Shakespeare created. We have pity and

charity for him because we are human beings; but as spectators of a great drama we are quite content that he should refuse thrice his bond; for had he taken the money what a weak and flat conclusion the play would have had! The storm cloud of the trial scene must gather, darken, burst, and scatter; then all are ready for the moonlight of the fifth act, wherein the comedy and romance are restored. Shylock's last exit is nobly pathetic. What has he left to live for? His daughter has left him. He is ordered by court to give all his money to her and the Christian youth that stole her away from home; and last, and most bitter of all, he is required at once to become himself a Christian: no wonder he pitifully beseeches the judge to send the deed after him for his signing! And we are convinced that he totters home, in reality, to his death — knowing that he has received a shock he cannot sustain, and that only death can release him from the promises he is forced to make. It is one of the high points of tragedy in all Shakespeare's plays; it is only by a magic turn that he can bring the play back to comedy and make us forget the lone figure drooping and fading through the courtroom door.

SCENE II

In this short and apparently insignificant scene Shakespeare has a real purpose to effect; first, Portia must still carry out in a careful, professional way the lawyer's duty of sending the deed after Shylock; second, by asking Gratiano to take her clerk to the Jew's house, she makes a natural opportunity for Nerissa to obtain her husband's ring. So the scene both ends and relieves the great court scene.

ACT V, SCENE I

Does this fifth act seem superfluous to you after the tragic story is ended? Why did Shakespeare add it? Was the play in his mind a comedy or a tragedy? Do you think the figure of Shylock has absorbed the interest of the play to a greater extent than was Shakespeare's intention? The bond story is ended, the casket story is told — what material is left for a last act? Notice how the strain of the trial scene is relieved by beauty of setting, music, the words of lovers, the return of the travelers, the jesting puzzle of the rings, which quiet and soothe us for the end. Portia's garden is doubtless one of the grand ones that

belong to Italian palaces, full of trees, shrubs, flowers, with terraces and fountains, with avenues and paths. Through this she may for some time be coming toward her home before Lorenzo hears her voice. It creates an atmosphere of repose, of seclusion from the world, and happy retirement for the lovers. Its magic makes even Lorenzo and Jessica thoughtful; Launcelot talks only to music. Portia's entrance is quiet; she brings with her just enough of the memory of the tragic trial to make her serious; she returns happy and contented to the halls she had left so soon after Bassanio's choosing of the right casket. So it is clear that she is, to Shakespeare's mind, the great centralizing character of the play. All the other characters have been drawn toward her and are with her at the end. She is gay, as her play with the rings shows; she is sobered by the responsibility she has discharged; she is truly in love. When she invites all to enter her palace the gay procession moves from the lovely garden through a broad door that glimpses marble halls and splendor and luxury within. So Shakespeare has ended the play as a full romantic comedy. Its music should sound long after the characters leave the garden. Whom would you wish to see leave last? The music all through the play is beautiful. The song, "Tell me where is fancy bred," is usually sung as a three-part glee and adds the right touch of romance to the casket scene. But the instrumental music running all through the last act, with occasional beautiful lines, such as "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon the bank," caught up by voices, lifts the entire scene into the realm of unearthly beauty.

SUBJECTS FOR THEMES

While the notes on each scene suggest many subjects for both oral and written composition, the following are also suggested:

1. Act I, Scene 1 as a successful opening for a play. (Consider its success in arousing interest in the audience; compare with the openings of any other Shakespeare plays you may know.)

2. A character sketch of Antonio. (Weigh his good points and his weaknesses and think how Shakespeare used them; consider why he fades away as the play progresses, and note the scenes where his presence is required; has he changed by the end of the play?)

3. The first performance of *The Merchant of Venice* at the

Globe Theater in 1598. (Use here material taken from your reading and your own imagination.)

4. Portia's father writes his will. (Describe all the problems in his mind as he considered it, his affection for his daughter, his desire to insure her happiness.)

5. Morocco's choice of the caskets. (Do you like or dislike him? Does he love Portia? Is his choice consistent with his character?)

6. Morocco and Arragon discuss their fortunes after their choice of the caskets. (Consider their different ways of accepting defeat.)

7. Compare Launcelot Gobbo with Touchstone in *As You Like It*.

8. A character sketch of Jessica.

9. Describe the beauty, gaiety, and pathos of the scene where Lorenzo steals away Jessica.

10. A masquerade in Venice. (Describe it from the suggestions in Shakespeare's scenes, and from pictures of Venice you may know.)

11. Give in narrative or in dramatic form the scene that Salarino and Solanio report in Act II, Scene 8.

12. Describe the stage picture which you see when Arragon is making his choice.

13. Discuss the lack of understanding in this play between the younger and the older generation. (Consider here Shylock and Jessica and Lorenzo, and Launcelot and old Gobbo.)

14. The nobility of Shylock.

15. Which is most dear to Shylock — his money, his daughter, his religion?

16. The purpose of the music while Bassanio makes his choice. (Describe the scene, Portia's help, the guidance of the music.)

17. Compare Portia's spirit of fun in preparing for the trial with Rosalind's when she started for the Forest of Arden.

18. Explain the bulwarks and the weaknesses of Shylock's position in the court room.

19. Is Portia an "upright judge"?

20. Describe the great Hall of Justice in the Doge's Palace. (Pretend that you have to set the scene; describe your background and arrangement of properties.)

21. Reproduce in narrative form the most intense moment in the whole play.

22. "Send the deed after me." (Describe the dramatic power and the pathos of this speech.)

23. Discuss Shakespeare's fifth act in this play. (What is its purpose; is that purpose fulfilled?)

24. Portia as the central, dominating figure in the play.

25. Explain why you consider the play a tragedy or a comedy.

QUESTIONS FROM RECENT COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION PAPERS[1]

These thirty subjects have been selected from the English examinations of the College Entrance Examination Board, from 1916 to 1927. The parentheses are supplied to suggest applying the subjects to *The Merchant of Venice*.

1. Ruskin said about Shakespeare's plays, "The catastrophe is caused always by the folly or fault of a man; the redemption, if there be any, is by the wisdom and virtue of a woman, and, failing that, there is none." (Apply this to *The Merchant of Venice*.)

2. "A good dramatic plot requires that the audience not only must be satisfied with what takes place on the stage, but must be convinced that the course of events is inevitable." Trace briefly the varying fortunes of one of Shakespeare's great characters to show that this statement is true.

3. Show how (in *The Merchant of Venice*) a choice made by an important character between two possible courses of action determines the plot.

4. In a play of Shakespeare (take *The Merchant of Venice*) prove the importance of some of the minor characters.

5. A skillful dramatist makes clear the motives which determine the actions of his characters. Show that this statement is true in the case of one of Shakespeare's great characters (take Shylock) by analyzing the motives which determine his actions at the critical moments of his career.

6. In any play (take *The Merchant of Venice*) describe the scene and incident in which the crisis occurs. Why do you consider it the crisis of the action?

7. In a Shakespearean play there is usually a scene which marks the turning point in the fortunes of the hero. Select such

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a scene, describe the events that happen in it, and show how these events affect the subsequent career of the hero.

8. It has been said by a recent American critic that the plays of Shakespeare "unfold primarily not character but events, and at the end, except for casual conversions, his characters are pretty much what they were at the beginning." In *The Merchant of Venice* do you find this to be the case? Explain your answer by definite references.

9. "In a drama the course of action is usually determined by the character of one of the principal personages." Trace carefully the action of one of Shakespeare's plays to show that this statement is true.

10. The fifth act of *The Merchant of Venice.*

11. What are some of the advantages resulting from the presence of comic characters in *The Merchant of Venice*?

12. Was justice done to Shylock?

13. What is there that you admire or condemn in the attitude of parent to child and of child to parent in *The Merchant of Venice*?

14. What is the attitude of the chief characters in *The Merchant of Venice* toward money?

15. In a play of Shakespeare with which you are familiar choose some moment of importance to the hero. Tell as fully as you can why, at this moment, the hero acts as he does.

16. In a comedy of Shakespeare describe the leading tragic or serious characters (take *The Merchant of Venice*).

17. Craft and cruelty as exemplified in any one of these dramas (take *The Merchant of Venice*).

18. Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* has presumably many years to live. Sketch his probable later history.

19. One critic asserts that Shakespeare had an enormous specific acquaintance with the common people; another, that he was essentially artistocratic. Which of these statements is true; or are both true?

20. Show that the tragedy in some Shakespearean play that you have read consists not merely in death (if it does), but also in mental suffering, moral weakening, and a defeated purpose.

21. The life of young people in Venice as seen in *The Merchant of Venice.*

22. Why *The Merchant of Venice* is called a comedy.

23. What relation do the minor love stories in *The Merchant of Venice* bear to the main plot?

BOOKS ABOUT SHAKESPEARE

The few books given here will be of real interest to students.

A Life of William Shakespeare. Sidney Lee. The Macmillan Company.

Shakespeare: His Life, Art, and Character. Rev. H. N. Hudson. Ginn and Company.

Introduction to Shakespeare. Edward Dowden. Charles Scribner's Sons.

A Life of William Shakespeare. Joseph Quincy Adams. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Shakespearean Playhouses. Joseph Quincy Adams. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Shakespeare's Workmanship. Sir Arthur Quiller Couch. Henry Holt & Company.

Our Fellow Shakespeare. Horace J. Bridges. McClurg and Company.

Characteristics of Shakespeare's Women. Anna B. Jameson. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Shakespeare's England. William Winter. Moffat, Yard and Company.

William Shakespeare. John Masefield. Henry Holt and Company.

The People for Whom Shakespeare Wrote. Charles Dudley Warner. Harper and Brothers.

Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines. Mary Cowden Clarke. Page & Company.

Shakespeare the Boy. W. J. Rolfe. Harper and Brothers.

Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist. Richard G. Moulton. Clarendon Press.

Introduction to Shakespeare. McCracken, Pierce, and Durham. The Macmillan Company.

The Facts about Shakespeare. Neilson and Thorndike. The Macmillan Company.

William Shakespeare: Poet, Dramatist, and Man. H. W. Mabie. The Macmillan Company.

Shakespeare and the Modern Stage. Sidney Lee. The Macmillan Company.

Shakespeare. Walter Raleigh. The Macmillan Company.

Shakespeare's Theatre. Ashley Thorndike. The Macmillan Company.

There are three good stories of Shakespeare's times for young people: *Master Skylark*, by John Bennett, The Century Co.; *Will Shakespeare's Little Lad*, by Imogen Clark, Charles Scribner's Sons, and *The Boy Will*, by R. E. Rogers, Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Kenilworth, by Scott, pictures Warwickshire and London in 1575, and his *The Fortunes of Nigel* is a good presentation of London in 1604, the year in which *Othello* was probably written.

More fanciful reading may be found in the following:

The Dark Lady of the Sonnets. George Bernard Shaw. Brentano's.

Will Shakespeare. Clemence Dane. The Macmillan Company.

Fortune and Men's Eyes. Josephine Preston Peabody. Houghton Mifflin Company.

If Shakespeare Were Alive To-day. Lord Dunsany. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

A Road House in Arden. P. Moeller. Alfred A. Knopf.

The Good that Men Do, in *Harvard Plays.* Brentano's.

The Rehearsal. M. Baring. Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc.